

PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BARBIE DOLL'S NEW LOOKS

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ABSTRACT

THESIS: Parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll's new looks

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The Barbie doll has been a relevant idol for the ideal body shape to adolescents and children worldwide since its creation in 1959. As the doll maintains popularity and continues to adapt a more adolescent appearance, the importance of recognizing the doll's influence on body image in children increases. A previous study has reported that adolescents and children are more susceptible to their surroundings than adults (Dittmar et al., 2006). The evolution of media and its continued outreach to younger audiences has made it one of the most dominant influencers in children's perception of body image. Considering toys, specifically the Barbie doll, a form of media, we can assume that that body shape illustrated by the doll impacts the body image of children. Previous studies have recognized a negative effect caused by the thin figure of fashion dolls on the body satisfaction of adolescents and children (Anschutz & Engels, 2010; Dittmar et al., 2006; Dittmar, 2009; Starr & Ferguson, 2012). Parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll and their concerns of its influence on their children's body image may influence them to approve or disapprove of the doll as an appropriate role model for their children. Mattel has released a *Fashionistas* line of Barbie dolls with variances in body shape (tall, petite, and curvy) (Barbie: The new fashionistas, 2016). This pilot study seeks to determine the perceptions

of 37 parents and guardians aged 18 and older with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old regarding the body shape of the original Barbie doll, as well as the body shapes of the curvy, petite, and tall Barbie doll body styles. Results indicated that while the majority of participants (59.5%) believe the original Barbie doll to be a positive influence on body image, there are still physical characteristics to the doll's body shape (e.g. size of waist, hips, and chest) parents would make to illustrate a more positive body image to their children. Comparative statistics found that gender, age, and employment with a midwestern university correlate to variations in parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll and the body shapes presented in the *Fashionistas* collection.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Barbie doll, one of the bestselling toys worldwide, has made Mattel one of the most successful toy companies in the world (Forman-Brunell, 2009). According to a Mattel press release (Fast Facts About Barbie, 2016), the Barbie doll is the number one doll property in the United States with gross sales reported in 2014 at \$1.01 billion worldwide. According to Rogers (1999), 99% of 3- to 10-year old children in the United States own at least one Barbie doll. Barbie has over 13 million fans on Facebook, 240,000 followers on Twitter, and over 600,000 followers on Instagram (Fast Facts About Barbie, 2016). As the Barbie doll continues to attract a younger audience and contributes to the “kids growing older younger” phenomenon (Shales, 2007), understanding the effects the doll is having on body image and parents’ perceptions of these effects could allow a suggested redesign of the Barbie doll in attempt to improve body satisfaction in children who are playing with and are exposed to the Barbie doll.

Studies analyzing body dissatisfaction typically focus on adult subjects rather than children (Dittmar et al., 2006). However, children are more susceptible to the surroundings to which they are exposed and more likely to imitate what they observe; therefore, children can be at higher risk of experiencing body dissatisfaction (Anschutz & Engels, 2010). Eyal and Te’eni-Harari (2013) reported that ideal body shape portrayed by the media generally causes an increase

in body dissatisfaction. Toys may be viewed as an extension of the media as they are a large contributor to the development of cognitive, physical, and socioemotional functions in children (Kabadayi, 2014). Parents and guardians are likely to consider their perceptions of certain toys, such as the Barbie doll, and choose toys for their children based on their concerns for their child's well-being (Kabadayi, 2014) and to benefit the varying developmental stages from childhood into adolescence (Oravec, 2000).

Dolls allow children to re-enact elements of their environment which can communicate how they are interpreting what they observe in society (Kuther & McDonald, 2004). Dittmar et al. (2006) report an increase in negative body image in young girls who play with fashion dolls. Criticisms have been reported of fashion dolls, such as the Barbie doll and the Bratz dolls, appearing too adolescent and over sexualized (Levine & Kilbourne, 2008). Other studies have reported negative effects on body image in children and adolescents caused by the Barbie doll. Results reported include views of the doll being too thin (Kuther and McDonald, 2004) or too perfect (Collins et al., 2012), and restricted eating habits after adolescents play with a doll illustrating a thin body shape (Anschutz & Engels, 2010). These results provide evidence of the influence of the Barbie doll on body image in children.

Although several studies have reported negative effects of the Barbie doll on body image, few studies have attempted to determine any changes that should be made to the doll's physicality to promote more positive perceptions of the Barbie doll from gatekeepers and higher body satisfaction in children. For this study, the variables of focus are the original Barbie doll and the *Fashionistas* line introducing curvy, petite, and tall body shapes, and their illustration of body shape to children, and the influence of body image as regarded by parents choosing toys for their children. This study is designed to analyze: 1) the perceptions of parents' regarding the

body image demonstrated by the Barbie doll, 2) the curvy, petite, and tall Barbie doll body styles released by Mattel, and 3) potential changes that should be made to the existing Barbie doll to promote a more positive body image to children.

Problem

The Barbie doll is one of the bestselling toys worldwide (Forman-Brunell, 2009). The original body shape of the Barbie doll, however, is unrealistic and influences the body image of children (Collins et al., 2012). Dittmar et al. (2006) report an increase in negative body image in young girls who play with fashion dolls. As gatekeepers, parents and guardians select the toys and dolls based upon what they consider appropriate models for their children. A parent's positive or negative perception of the Barbie doll may influence his or her decision to purchase the doll for his or her child(ren). Mattel has released a *Fashionistas* collection with diverse physical attributes (tall, curvy, and petite) (Barbie: The new fashionistas, 2016). The dolls have not been studied substantially regarding how the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes are perceived by parents as influencers of body image to their children and how the dolls' influence is reflected in parents' selection and approval of the Barbie dolls for their children.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to understand parents' perceptions of body image as illustrated by the *Fashionista* Barbie doll body shapes. Also, if a more positive body image is needed, how the Barbie doll should be re-designed to promote a more positive body image to children.

Research Questions

The following research questions were examined in this study:

1. How do parents perceive the original Barbie doll?
 - a. Do parents consider the Barbie doll an influencer of body image to their children?
 - b. Do parents consider the original Barbie doll a positive or negative influencer of body image to their children?
2. How do parents perceive the three additional *Fashionistas* Barbie doll body shapes (tall, petite, curvy)?
 - a. Do parents consider the *Fashionistas* Barbie doll body shapes an influencer of body image to children?
 - b. Do parents consider the tall Barbie doll a positive or negative influencer of body image to their children?
 - c. Do parents consider the petite Barbie doll a positive or negative influencer of body image to their children?
 - d. Do parents consider the curvy Barbie doll a positive or negative influencer of body image to their children?
3. Are curvy, petite, and tall Barbie doll body styles, released by Mattel in the *Fashionistas* collection, perceived by parents as influencers of body image?
 - a. If so, how do parents compare the influence of the original Barbie doll, the tall Barbie doll, the curvy Barbie doll, and the petite Barbie doll on body image to their children?
4. How do parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll influence their decision to purchase the doll for their children?

5. What changes should be made to the original Barbie doll design based on parents' perception of the original Barbie doll in an effort to add or increase positive influence on children's body image?

Rationale

The Barbie doll continues to be an active model in children's lives for the ideal body shape (Collins et al., 2012). Evidence from previous studies suggests that the exaggerated figure of the Barbie doll is recognized to cause negative effects on body image in adolescents and children. As gatekeepers, parents and guardians have the control over which toys their children can play with. Children's toys often cause concern for those in charge of a child's growth and development (Kabadayi, 2014). Promoting a positive body image to children could influence parents' approval of certain toys.

Little to no research has been conducted since Mattel's release of the Barbie *Fashionistas* line which introduces three body styles (tall, petite, and curvy) to the Barbie collection (Barbie: The new fashionistas, 2016). Understanding parents' perceptions of the original Barbie doll and the three additional *Fashionistas* body shapes can help determine whether or not the Barbie doll should be re-designed in order to promote a more positive body image.

Assumptions

The researcher made the following assumptions in the implementation of the study and in the interpretation of the data:

1. The participants understood the directions when completing the survey instrument.
2. The participants responded honestly and to the best of their ability.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following definitions will be used:

1. Body dissatisfaction: the experience of negative thoughts and esteem about one's body (Dittmar et al., 2006).
2. Body ideal: a body shape conceived by a society or culture and demonstrated commonly through media to be adapted as a personal standard by viewers (Knauss, Paxton, & Alsaker, 2008).
3. Body image: attitudes towards the body and body size as perceived by the individual (Mohr et al., 2010).
4. Body Shape: the silhouette created by a person's body mass and the distribution of that body mass (Ruff, 2000).
5. Fashionistas Collection: the Barbie doll collection presented by Mattel in 2016 featuring the original Barbie doll body shape as well as three additional body shapes (curvy, petite, and tall), seven skin tones, 22 eye colors, and 24 hairstyles (Barbie: The new fashionistas, 2016).

6. Original Barbie doll: referring to the original Barbie doll body shape presently part of the *Fashionistas* collection and has a body shape reminiscent of the first Barbie doll created in 1959 (Forman-Brunell, 2009).
7. Sexualization: the act of being sexualized or sexualizing oneself, which includes reducing physical attractiveness to sexiness, valuing someone based solely on sex appeal, or treating someone as a sexual object rather than as a person (American Psychological Association, 2007).

Summary

Body dissatisfaction is a common experience that develops at a young age. Previous studies have suggested that the ideal body shape illustrated by a Barbie doll causes body dissatisfaction. The targeted audience of the Barbie doll consists of children and adolescents. The ideal body shape exhibited by the Barbie doll is being interpreted by children and adolescents and therefore may be influencing their body image. Choosing a positive role model that supports a positive body image is often a concern of parents and guardians when choosing appropriate toys for their children. Understanding the perceptions of parents regarding the Barbie doll and its body shape could encourage a re-designed Barbie doll with a body shape that promotes a more positive body image to their children.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to understand parents' perceptions of body image as illustrated by the *Fashionista* Barbie doll body shapes. Also, if a more positive body image is needed, how the Barbie doll should be re-designed to promote a more positive body image to children. This chapter will present a review of the literature that describes how dolls illustrate body shape and influence body image, the current Barbie doll and her new looks, and the influence of body image on parents' selection and approval of toys for their children.

The Barbie Doll and her New Looks

The widespread geographic and demographic reach of the Barbie doll increases the importance of understanding how it affects the body perceptions of children who are playing with the doll. Although the Barbie doll was originally designed to target pre-teen girls, it is now widely enjoyed by children of younger ages and contributing to the idea of "KGOY" or kids growing older younger (Shales, 2007). Fisher (2016) reports the Barbie doll has targeted children aged three to nine in the past and presently targets a younger audience between the ages of three and six. As gatekeepers, parents and guardians maintain control of which toys they consider suitable and appropriate role models for their children. Parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll,

including the curvy, petite, and tall body styles, and their influence on children's body image may impact their decision to purchase or not purchase a Barbie doll for their children.

The Original Barbie Doll

The Barbie doll has been one of the most widespread toys since its creation in 1959 (Forman-Brunell, 2009; Rössner, 2014). Since the Barbie doll has been available, it has grown to become the most purchased doll in both the United States and worldwide and has been a contributor to making Mattel the most successful toy company in the world (Forman-Brunell, 2009).

The popularity of the Barbie doll has been measured by the means of various statistics from previous studies. Kuther and McDonald (2004) have reported from the manufacturer that a Barbie doll is purchased every 3 seconds and that it is ranked by girls between the ages of 8 and 12 as their first or second favorite of all their toys. Dittmar et al. (2006) have reported similar statistics regarding the popularity of the Barbie doll, such as 99% of 3- to 10-year old girls living in the United States own at least one Barbie doll. The widespread reach of the doll can be attributed to the media. The development of cable and its accessibility in many homes has made it possible for the Barbie doll to be one of the earliest toys to be marketed via television thus reaching out to a wider audience at a much faster rate than previous toys (Rössner, 2014).

Barbie's New Looks

Throughout the years, the Barbie doll has struggled to create a diverse experience for adolescents and children. Minimal changes have been made to the overall silhouette and proportions of the first Barbie doll body shape from 1959 to the present original Barbie doll that

is part of the *Fashionistas* collection (Rössner, 2014). It wasn't until 1967 when the doll was even available with an African American skin tone (Rössner, 2014). This African American Barbie doll was re-designed in 1980, but still did not successfully capture the features of an African American woman. The doll was remarked as African American in skin tone but lacking distinguishing racial features and body build (Rössner, 2014). Minute changes have been made to the doll throughout the years, but more often in facial expression and features than in body proportions. The year of 1997 marked the very first Barbie doll that was re-designed with a slightly wider waist (Rössner, 2014).

Only since the beginning of 2016 has the Barbie doll as we know it been available in various body shapes, hair colors, and skin tones (Barbie: The new fashionistas, 2016). The body designs include: the traditional, or original, Barbie, tall Barbie, petite Barbie, and curvy Barbie (see Figure 1). The *Fashionistas* line of Barbie dolls consists of four body styles, seven skin tones, 22 eye colors, and 24 hairstyles that can be mixed and matched to create a more diverse playing experience (Barbie: The new fashionistas, 2016; Fisher, 2016). Since the release of the *Fashionistas* collection, Mattel continues to add physical features to the collection to become more inclusive (Mallenbaum, 2018; Sax, 2018). Table 1 lists the body measurements of each doll to illustrate how the four *Fashionista* dolls compare in size. Measurements were taken by the researcher by wrapping a string around the circumference of each point of measurement. The string was then stretched out along a ruler to record the measurement.

Kim Culmone, Vice President of Barbie Design, told *USA Today* that those at Mattel wanted to create “evolving images that come to mind when people talk about Barbie,” to show that the company is listening to criticisms and desires from consumers, (Mallenbaum, 2018, pp. 03D). This *Fashionistas* line of dolls is Mattel's attempt to maintain Barbie's relevance and

appeal to parents who seek a positive role model for their children (Fisher, 2016). With the introduction of the *Fashionistas* collection and the curvy, petite, and tall body styles, Barbie's sales showed an increase of 9% in the fourth quarter of 2017 (Mallenbaum, 2018).



Figure 1 - *Fashionistas* Collection: The *Fashionistas* line of Barbie dolls created by Mattel. From left to right: original Barbie, curvy Barbie, petite Barbie, Tall Barbie. Images retrieved from Barbie.Mattel.com

The *Fashionistas* line of Barbie dolls, also known as “The Evolution of Barbie,” is just one of the missions initiated by the Barbie brand. The updated Barbie brand has been modified to encourage young girls to be whatever they choose no matter how impossible the goal may seem. Richard Dickson, President and Chief Operating Officer at Mattel, stated “Barbie’s dramatic and most recent evolution, which began with the introduction of new [*Fashionistas*] body types, has continued. Barbie inspires the limitless potential in every girl,” (Sax, 2018, pp. 151).

Table 1. Barbie Doll *Fashionistas* Body Measurements

Point of Measurement	Description of Point of Measurement	Original Barbie Doll (Inches)	Curvy Barbie Doll (Inches)	Petite Barbie Doll (Inches)	Tall Barbie Doll (Inches)
Waist Width	Circumference of the narrowest point	3 1/2	4	3 3/8	3 3/4
Bust Width	Circumference of the widest point	4 3/4	5	4 3/8	4 7/8
Hip Width	Circumference of the widest point	4 7/8	5 7/8	4 7/8	5 1/4
Neck Width	Circumference of the midpoint	1 1/2	1 3/4	1 5/8	1 7/16
Torso Length	Base of neck to top of hip	2 3/4	2 1/2	2 7/16	2 3/4
Neck Length	Base of head to base of neck	13/16	3/4	3/4	7/8
Shoulder Length	Base of neck to shoulder joint	9/16	1/2	1/2	9/16
Arm Length	Edge of shoulder to fingertip	4 1/4	4 1/4	3 11/16	4 9/16
Bicep Width	Circumference at center of bicep	1 3/8	1 11/16	1 3/16	1 5/16
Forearm Width	Circumference at center of forearm	1 1/4	1 3/8	1	1 5/16
Wrist Width	Circumference of wrist	3/4	7/8	3/4	7/8
Bicep Length	Edge of shoulder to center of elbow joint	1 11/16	1 11/16	1 5/8	1 7/8
Forearm Length	Center of elbow joint to wrist	1 11/16	1 11/16	1 1/4	1 3/4
Leg Length	Top of hip to heel	6 3/8	6 3/8	5 3/4	6 3/4
Thigh Length	Top of hip to center of knee joint	3 3/16	3 3/16	2 3/4	3 5/8
Calf Length	Cent of knee joint to ankle	3	2. 7/8	2 1/2	3
Thigh Width	Circumference of the widest point	2 5/8	3 6/16	2 5/8	2 7/8
Calf Width	Circumference of the widest point	2	2 6/16	1 7/8	1 15/16
Ankle Width	Circumference of ankle	1	1	1	1
Inseam	Crotch to ankle	4 3/4	4 3/4	4 6/16	5 6/16
Foot Length	Edge of heel to tip of big toe	7/8	15/16	7/8	15/16
Hand Length	Wrist to tip of middle finger	7/8	7/8	13/16	1
Height	Top of head to tip of toe standing	11 5/8	11	10 5/8	12 1/8

“Girl Leadership” and “You Can Be Anything” are also additions to the Barbie Brand Mission (Barbie: Barbie brand mission, 2016). The “Girl Leadership” branch of the Barbie brand mission strives to raise the number of girls who currently wish for a leadership position in their future (39%). This mission is supported by the new “She Should Run” product line including a Barbie president and vice president collection. The Barbie brand also provides educational tools to further promote leadership roles to young girls. The “You Can Be Anything” branch of the Barbie brand mission encourages young girls to choose diverse career paths, particularly those

which are historically labelled as male-dominated. The “You Can Be Anything” promotion of the Barbie brand mission is supported by Barbie dolls illustrating diverse occupations to young girls (e.g. president, vice president, veterinarian, firefighter, etc.). Dickson stated about the *Fashionistas* evolution of the Barbie brand that “Barbie is the most diverse doll line in the marketplace, which has influenced asset creation in a variety of constructive ways, from imagery that reflects the real-world girls see around them every day, to even more empowering messaging,” (Sax, 2018, pp. 151).

The Barbie brand continues to evolve with new dolls and collections inspiring diversity and female empowerment to young girls. Culmone discussed a Lara Croft Tomb Raider doll which has a muscular, toned body shape (Mallenbaum, 2018). Culmone and Dickson also mention the *Sheroes* collection (see figure 2) which features past and present female role models such as: ballerina Misty Copeland and gymnast Gabby Douglas (Sax, 2018, pp. 151). The dolls featured in the *Sheroes* collection, introduced in 2018, vary in body shapes and physical features to best illustrate their real-life heroines (e.g. height, curves, skin tone, etc.). Some of the additions to the *Sheroes* collection in March 2018 were fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad (the first Muslim-American athlete to wear a hijab while competing), pilot Amelia Earhart, Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, and mathematician Katherine Johnson (Mallenbaum, 2018; Sax, 2018).

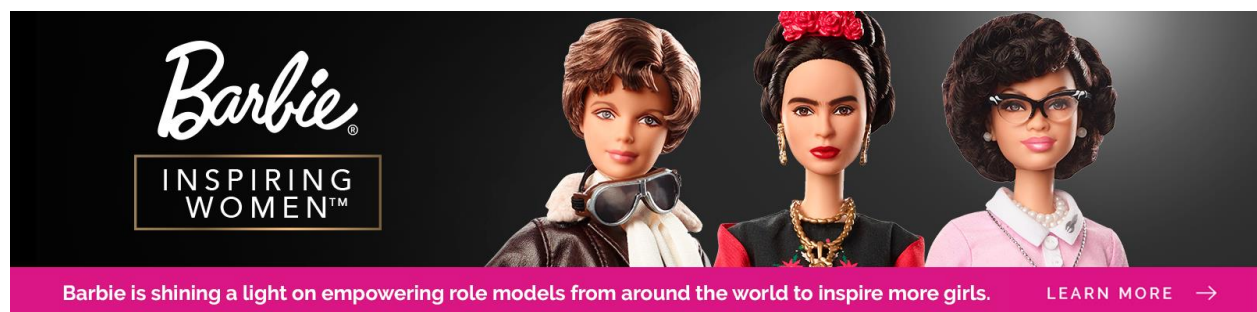


Figure 2 - Barbie *Sheroes* Collection: pictured left to right, Barbie versions of: Amelia Earhart, Frida Kahlo, and Katherine Johnson. Image retrieved from Barbie.Mattel.com

While the *Fashionistas* line and the updated Barbie brand mission evolve toward a more diverse fashion doll, it may still be argued that these figures are not good representations of the female population and the diverse body shapes found within that population. The petite Barbie is still very thin with a waist measuring at 3.375 inches which is only 0.0125 inches less than that of the original Barbie at 3.5 inches (see Table 1). The curvy Barbie is measurably larger in all measurements of width compared to the other three dolls. However, the proportions of the curvy Barbie doll in the waist and bust match those of the petite Barbie doll's waist and bust measurements (curvy Barbie doll waist: 4", bust: 5"; petite Barbie doll waist: 3.375", bust: 4.375") (see Table 1). The overall proportions of the curvy Barbie doll could arguably still be promoting an ideal body shape regardless of overall size.

Mattel continues to make improvements and listens to Barbie's audience. Regarding the *Fashionistas* doll line, Richard Dickson revealed that Mattel will continue to diversify the *Fashionistas* line by adding more body types, skin tones, eye colors, and hairstyles (Sax, 2018). Kim Culmone stated that "Barbie will continue to evolve and be more inclusive to all kinds of people;" however, Culmone also understands and notes that the evolution of Barbie will not be a quick one due to its continuous high presence in pop culture, (Mallenbaum, 2018, pp. 03D).

Dolls' Illustration of Body Shape

Various forms of media and maternal example have been reported as the two most influential models of body image and sexualization for young girls (Starr & Ferguson, 2012). With an understanding of the effects of media on body dissatisfaction in children and considering toys, and therefore fashion dolls, a form of media, we can infer that fashion dolls contribute to body dissatisfaction in children. Toys provide a variety of messages that children absorb while

they are playing. Dolls give children the ability to re-enact desirable situations and values in society such as with regards to gender, adult roles, or cultural beliefs (Kuther & McDonald 2004, Shales, 2007) and may be a negative model encouraging the sexualization of girls at a young age (Starr & Ferguson, 2012). When children play with toys, they are recreating and interpreting the elements of their environment and society as they see it. This recreation with toys communicates how children are processing information and influences the development of their self-identity (Kuther & McDonald, 2004).

When children are subjected to the encouragement of sexualization, they are at risk for future complications including self-body shaming, objectification by others, and unwanted sexual advances by others (Liss et al., 2011). Concerns and criticisms have been expressed toward various fashion dolls including the Barbie doll and the Bratz dolls. The Bratz dolls have received criticisms for their adolescent figure with sexy clothing, excessive makeup, large eyes, and plump lips (Levine & Kilbourne, 2008).

Starr and Ferguson (2012) conducted a study that examined the self-sexualization of young girls when exposed to two paper dolls, one sexualized and the other non-sexualized. The researchers hypothesized that more girls would identify with the sexualized doll as their actual self as well as their ideal self. Data collection from 60 girls between the ages of six and nine resulted with the sexualized doll chosen significantly as the ideal self ($X^2(1, n=60)=8.07, p=.005, \Phi=.37$), but no significant selection as the actual self ($X^2(1, n=60)=.60, ns$) (Starr & Ferguson, 2012). From these results, we can infer that young girls are experiencing body dissatisfaction when exposed to fashion dolls as they are viewing their actual self as non-sexualized and desiring the sexualized model for their ideal selves.

Rather than promoting the idea of, “Barbie is perfect, you can be too,” fashion dolls could promote the idea of, “you are perfect, and your doll is too.” A good example of this is the “Truly Me” dolls made by American Girl (also made by Mattel) (American girl, 2016). These dolls are modeled after adolescents and marketed with the idea of choosing a doll who relates to the child’s own appearance. They come with a variety of hair colors, hair styles, eye colors, and skin tones. To make the dolls even more relatable, American Girl offers a wide variety of accessories to comply with the child’s interests: e.g. athletic uniforms, baking sets, pets, dance equipment, etc. as well as storybooks for historical and contemporary characters featuring female heroines created by American girl (American girl, 2016).

Barbie and Body Image

Body dissatisfaction, “the experience of negative thoughts and esteem about one’s body” is generally analyzed in adults, particularly females (Dittmar et al., 2006). As media and other influencers reach younger audiences and kids exhibit the “kids growing older younger” phenomenon, the importance of analyzing changes in body dissatisfaction at a younger age is increasing (Shales, 2007).

The body shape design of the Barbie doll gives adolescents a model of what may be viewed as the ideal body shape. The influence of toys on body image elevated when the Barbie doll became one of the earliest and most widely recognized three-dimensional, adult-figured dolls in the market (Collins et al., 2012). Previously baby dolls were generally given to children, specifically girls, rather than dolls modeled after adults (Forman-Brunell, 2009), as this encouraged children to partake in maternal duties and sentiments.

The Barbie doll became an early alternative to the baby doll (Rössner, 2014). When Handler originally created that Barbie doll, it was designed to combine the best of both baby dolls and fashion paper dolls. Unlike the fashion paper dolls modeled after adults, Barbie was a three-dimensional adult figure that could be posed and moved to act out scenes and situations yet did not encourage the idea of needing to be taken care of like a baby doll (Collins et al., 2012).

The iconic shape of the original Barbie doll (blonde hair, blue-eyed, slim waist, and voluptuous curves) has influenced the ideal shape for women since its creation in 1959 (Forman-Brunell, 2009; Rössner, 2014). Thomas (2006), notes how the shape of the Barbie doll influences the ideal body shape even though it reflects a very miniscule portion of the female population and stresses how this influence extends to the children who are playing with the doll. This influence on children has increased as the doll has evolved from modeling an adult to showing a stronger resemblance to adolescent figure and features.

When the Barbie doll is marketed to appear younger, it is more appealing to a younger audience (Forman-Brunell, 2009). As the age of the audience decreases, the age of those who are submitted to body image preconceptions created by the doll decreases. Even though the Barbie doll has evolved into having more adolescent features, this does not hold true for its body proportions. While the doll is made to seem younger and less mature to appeal to a younger audience, its body shape is still that of a fully developed, adult woman (Forman-Brunell, 2009). Young adolescents and children are exposed to a Barbie doll who acts and appeals to their age but illustrates body proportions that are unattainable and unhealthy (Dittmar et al., 2006), for their age-group and in most cases for an adult woman.

While the Barbie doll is modeled after an adult figure, the body shape is exaggerated and, for most women, unattainable (Dittmar et al., 2006). The size of the doll and its accessories are

created on a scale that is approximately one sixth the size of a real person; therefore, Barbie's life-size measurements would be a bust of 36 inches, waist of 18 inches, and hips of 33 inches. With these measurements, Barbie's scale is set at 110 pounds (Rössner, 2014). (These measurements would have been taken on an original Barbie doll body shape previous to the original Barbie doll body shape featured in the *Fashionistas* collection.) Researchers have calculated that a woman with these measurements and weighing 110 pounds would not even have enough body fat to menstruate (Rössner, 2014).

The Barbie *Fashionistas* line attempts to diminish the unrealistic body proportions illustrated by the Barbie doll and be more inclusive of various body shapes. However, design and function can cause limitations to the attempted realistic proportions of the doll. Kim Culmone comments on the criticism of a "thigh gap" visible on the body of the curvy Barbie doll. She stated that there "has to be some space for [the doll's] legs to move," (Mallenbaum, 2018, pp. 03D). Design teams at Mattel have evolved their designs by allowing the limbs of the doll to flex outward on a wider angle than previous models. This way the doll still has moveable legs but appear closer together for aesthetic purposes and reduction of the visible "thigh gap" (Mallenbaum, 2018).

Several studies have been conducted regarding the Barbie doll and its influence on body image and body dissatisfaction. Dittmar et al. (2006) conducted a visual study by utilizing images to analyze adolescents' perceptions of body image. The participants were separated into three groups and each group was given a storybook that contained images of the Barbie doll, an Emme doll (see Figure 3) – a fashion doll with a more average body shape – or neutral images. Participants then participated in a brief survey to measure body dissatisfaction. The results indicated greater body dissatisfaction in the participants ($F = 7.53, p < .01$) who were exposed to

images of the Barbie doll. There was no significant difference in body dissatisfaction between the participants who were exposed to the Emme doll and those who were exposed the neutral control images. These results suggest that fashion dolls in general are not causing body dissatisfaction, but the body shape illustrated by the doll may be influencing body image.



Figure 3 – Emme vs. Barbie : An Emme doll by Tonner (left) compared to an original Barbie doll by Mattel (right). Images retrieved from Tonner.com and Barbie.Mattel.com

A study similar to that of Dittmar et al. (2006) was conducted that used actual dolls rather than images of the dolls. Anschutz and Engels (2010) randomly assigned girls, who ranged from first to fourth grade, to play with a thin doll, an average sized doll, or no doll (Legos). After playing with the dolls, the girls partook in a taste test to analyze if food intake had been affected by the type of toy the girl was playing with. The girls who played with the thin doll ate significantly less during the taste test than did those who played with the average sized doll or the Legos. These results are consistent with the results obtained by Dittmar et al. (2006) and

suggest that the fashion doll itself is not causing the body dissatisfaction or the restricted eating, but rather the size of the doll and its body shape.

Worobey and Worobey (2013) also conducted a study that exposed children to actual fashion dolls of varying sizes. The key difference in this study is the age of the participants. Worobey and Worobey (2013) chose to analyze younger participants (ages three and a half to five and a half years old) to demonstrate that body dissatisfaction begins younger than we realize. Each of the participants were placed in front of all three of the dolls (thin, average-sized, plus-sized) and asked a series of questions about which doll held specific personality traits and their views of the dolls. The majority of the positive characteristic traits were associated with the thin doll while the plus-sized doll was generally associated with negative traits. Interestingly, the average-sized doll was generally selected as the happiest and the smartest of the three dolls. An important result from this study arose when the participants were asked, “Which of these dolls would you most like to play with?” Seventy percent of the participants stated that they would want to play with the thin doll despite the average-sized doll being rated as the happiest and the smartest. The authors concluded more positive attributes were associated with the thin doll than with the average-sized ($t(39)=6.93, p < .001$) or the plus-sized doll ($t(39)=2.23, p < .05$).

Rice et al. (2016) questioned how the physical play compared to the observation of both a 3-dimensional and 2-dimensional Barbie doll influenced young girls’ (aged five to eight years old) thin-ideal internalization, body esteem, and body dissatisfaction. In this study, participants were randomly assigned to interact with the Barbie doll either by physically playing with the doll, physically observing the doll, or viewing a print version of the doll or to a control group. In their findings, Rice et al. (2016) concluded that exposure to the Barbie doll, regardless of the format, led to higher thin-ideal internalization, but did not have the expected negative impact on

body esteem or body dissatisfaction. Participants who interacted with the Barbie doll did demonstrate significantly greater thin-ideal internalization than the control group ($F(1, 156)=6.37, p = .01, \eta^2=.04$). There were also no significant differences between interactions with the Barbie doll in physical and observational conditions.

The popularity of the Barbie doll has continued since its creation and so has that of other fashion dolls. While fashion dolls do encourage more to life for women than just being a mother such as baby dolls do, they are still representing what may be expected later in life (Anschutz & Engels, 2010) of the children who are playing with them. The Barbie doll does not always necessarily depict realistic expectations of body shape in female adults. Dittmar (2009, pp. 2) remarks how the Barbie doll demonstrates “body perfect” ideals early on in adolescence. Just as the body ideals in televised media can contribute to body dissatisfaction, so can these Barbie dolls with their unrealistic and often unattainable figures. In another report, Dittmar et al. (2006) state that dolls can be linked with negative body image and restrictive eating habits in young girls that they may carry on into womanhood.

Influence of Body Image on Parents’ Toy Selection

Children are much more susceptible to the elements in their environment and are much more likely to imitate what they absorb (Anschutz & Engels, 2010). Adolescence is an important time of developing personal identity, increasing peer pressure, and striving for uniqueness (Eyal & Te’eni-Harari, 2013). Even at very young ages when we do not realize that children are capable of fully understanding their environment, they are absorbing and interpreting what they take in from their surroundings. Previous studies have stated that the desire for thinness seems to appear around age six in adolescents (Dittmar et al., 2006). Creating body dissatisfaction at this

young age can lead to more negative effects as children progress into their teens and even into adolescence. In teenage years when puberty is at its peak, negative body perceptions are much more likely to arise (Eyal & Te'eni-Harari, 2013).

Many of the previous studies analyzing body image have focused on subjects in their late adolescence and upward. More recent studies have suggested that body dissatisfaction should be understood and identified at younger ages (Dittmar et al., 2006). Identifying body dissatisfaction at a younger age can help ensure that proper preventative procedures can be provided. Having a positive body image can improve mental and physical health (Dittmar, 2009). Grabe et al. (2008) offer specific examples of how body dissatisfaction impacts mental and physical health. For example, negative body image can contribute to an overall negative self-perception, may cause negative emotional states, and could encourage unhealthy habits such as restricted food intake.

Criticisms have been made about modern media (e.g. television, internet, toys and clothes) becoming increasingly sexualized or appearance focused and how this can influence children's development and body dissatisfaction (Slater et al, 2017). Previous studies have analyzed the media's effect on adolescents and children and how the type of characters they idolize influence their body satisfaction.

Anschutz and Engels (2010) have noted that children's books often associate goodness with beauty and wickedness with ugliness. Other studies have collected data on the favorite television characters of a group of adolescents and asked what they liked and disliked about those characters. The majority of the characters were between the ages of 13 and 18 and were characterized as having thin body shapes. Other results from this study found that the larger the character's body shape correlated to them being described as less beautiful, less attractive, and less well-groomed (Eyal & Te'eni-Harari, 2013).

McCabe and Ricciardelli (2003) observed that the two greatest influences on disordered eating in young women were media and family criticism. The impact of the media during adolescence greatly increases the chance of developing disordered eating habits that can be carried into adulthood (Anschutz & Engels, 2010; McCabe & Ricciardelli, 2003). Adolescents are exposed to media on a daily basis (Eyal & Te'eni-Harari, 2013). Visual media can include a variety of forms such as television, books, magazines, social media, etc.

Generally, body dissatisfaction is believed to emerge during pre-teen adolescence, but the reach of the media begins much younger (Eyal & Te'eni-Harari, 2013). Even young children at school being read a storybook are being exposed to body ideal images (Dittmar et al, 2006). Toys are an extension of media and are marketed via various forms in the media. Toys, television, and all other forms of visual media are absorbed at a very young age and illustrated body ideal images are interpreted by children and cause an increase in body dissatisfaction (Dittmar et al., 2006; Eyal & Te'eni-Harari, 2013).

Kabadayi (2014) states, "Toys used in play are effective media for teaching children while at the same time entertaining them," (pg. 43). When children play with toys, they are recreating and interpreting the elements of their environment and society as they see it. This simulated environment recreated with toys communicates how children are processing information and influences the development of their self-identity (Kuther & McDonald, 2004). Toys have been recognized as tools for stimulating imagination and developing social and intellectual skills in children (Mann, 1996) and regulating developmental stages such as cognitive, physical, and socioemotional functions (Kaya, 2007).

As gatekeepers, parents and guardians are responsible for choosing toys which they consider appropriate and suitable models for their children as they experience varying

developmental stages. A child's growth and development may be influenced by the toys with which they play (Kabadayi, 2014). This may include the development of healthy body image and body satisfaction. To promote the progression of these developmental stages, toys should be selected based upon their influence on the child during varying stages of childhood and adolescence (Oravec, 2000). Concerns and criticisms previously expressed regarding the unrealistic body shape of the original Barbie doll may influence a parent's decision to allow their child to play with a Barbie doll.

Perceptions of the Barbie Doll

Every child who owns a Barbie doll is being influenced by the symbolism illustrated by the doll. The symbolism of the Barbie doll has been interpreted broadly due to ever-changing values since Barbie was created by Ruth Handler in 1959 (Forman-Brunell, 2009; Rössner, 2014). Handler was not considered a stereotypical woman of her generation; she started and operated a business with her husband and was noted to be frustrated with other maternal duties such as raising her children, Barbara and Ken (Forman-Brunell, 2009). She wished to reflect this lifestyle through a fashion doll which later became known as Barbie.

No matter the original intention behind the imagined life of Barbie, the varying interpretations of the doll are countless. Forman-Brunell (2009) records accounts of the Barbie doll being described as the idol of American femininity, a symbol of female liberation, and an agent of female oppression. A negative example of these accounts includes one of Barbie being described as, "typically received as a blonde bimbo," (p. 306). Forman-Brunell (2009, p. 305) also describes a positive view on the symbolism of the Barbie doll as a, "personification of changing feminine ideals and a perpetuation of traditional notions of gender." The spectrum of

the accounts on the symbolism of Barbie are so varied that they can be summed up on a comprehensive scale of raging suffragette to matronly housewife.

Despite the variety of creative ways to describe the Barbie doll, the comments made can typically be grouped into one of two categories: she can do anything vs. frivolous shopper with an exaggerated body (Collins et al., 2012). Generally, the two sides can also be considered as positive and negative views of the image of the Barbie doll. The Barbie who “can do anything” is the Barbie who is depicted in any situation or occupation imaginable. Barbie can be an astronaut, a computer engineer, or a teacher and still look perfect while experiencing success. The doll also breaks the expectation of motherhood created by baby dolls. Rather than encouraging children to emulate raising a child by playing with baby dolls, the Barbie doll does often encourage the idea that women can do anything (Collins et al., 2012).

A more negative point of view attributed to the Barbie doll suggests that the doll promotes feminine oppression by limiting girls to a life centered on clothing and creating what is in most cases an unattainable body (Dittmar et al., 2006). Forman-Brunell (2009) argues that the Barbie doll promotes a lifestyle focused on shopping and being a fashion model rather than female liberation. An example of this would be the 1960s “Open Road” version of Barbie which promotes a sense of freedom in name, but is restrictive in wardrobe (Forman-Brunell, 2009). Wardrobe is not the only thing suppressing Barbie and her sense of female liberation. Early on in Barbie’s lifetime, Mattel had reported assurances to concerned mothers that the doll would help shape their daughters into ideal “marriageable ladies” (Collins et al., 2012). This suggests that at some point the doll was designed to shape girls into perfect wives and mothers rather than women who were a part of the workforce and movement toward female liberation.

Parents and guardians express their approval or disapproval of the Barbie doll by either allowing or prohibiting their child to play with a Barbie doll. Parents who have negative perceptions of the Barbie doll are less likely to allow their children to play with the doll. This may be influenced by ideas of the Barbie doll being a poor role model for children by simply being a “blonde bimbo” (Forman-Brunell, 2009) or by illustrating an unhealthy and unattainable body shape which may cause body dissatisfaction at a young age (Dittmar et al., 2006). Those with positive perceptions of the Barbie are more likely to allow their children to play with the doll on the premise that the doll promotes female empowerment and feminine leadership to young children.

Mattel is attempting to change perceptions of the Barbie doll with the evolution of the doll and the introduction of the *Fashionistas* collection. Kim Culmone reported that the number one selling doll in the *Fashionistas* line during the year 2017 was a redheaded Barbie with the curvy body style and a ‘Girl Power’ t-shirt (Sax, 2018). These sales reflect that parents are interested in a more diverse fashion doll rather than always looking for the perfect blonde that is the original Barbie.

Summary

Upon analyzing the literature, the evolution of the Barbie doll both physically and symbolically has fluctuated along with the values of culture and time. The unrealistic figure of the Barbie doll creates a premature notion that children should strive for an ideal body type that is often unattainable. The messages of body ideals are communicated just as clearly by toys and dolls as they are through other forms of visual media. Previous studies suggest that parents and guardians should take care to make developmental considerations regarding their children’s body

image. Analyses of playing with the Barbie doll and its effect on body dissatisfaction have proven that body dissatisfaction is generally lower when exposed to a fashion doll with a thin body shape.

Typically, younger adolescents and children were more noticeably influenced by the body shape of the dolls than were their pre-teen counterparts. Parents and guardians are likely to allow their perceptions of the Barbie doll influence their decision to allow or prohibit their children from playing with the doll. The Barbie doll's influence on children's body image may impact parents' decision to purchase the doll for their children. Mattel has taken a step forward by creating a *Fashionistas* line of Barbie dolls that come includes three additional body shapes (tall, petite, and curvy). While these body shapes are a positive change to the doll's original exaggerated curvy figure, they may be further improved by altering the body shape to promote a more positive body image to children and to improve parents' perceptions of the doll.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to understand parents' perceptions of body image as illustrated by the *Fashionista* Barbie doll body shapes. Also, if a more positive body image is needed, how the Barbie doll should be re-designed to promote a more positive body image to children. This study focuses on the *Fashionistas* collection including the original Barbie doll body shape as well as the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes created by Mattel for the *Fashionistas* collection and how they are perceived by parents and guardians. This chapter will describe the methods used to conduct the study.

Institutional Review Board

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of a midwestern university as an exempt study prior to implementation. The researcher conducting this analysis completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative training (Appendix A-3).

Subjects

This study focused on three samples of parents and guardians aged 18 and older with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old. The age range of 3 to 8 years old

was selected based on previous research suggesting that body dissatisfaction and influence on body image begins at a much younger age than previously believed (Dittmar et al., 2006, Dittmar 2009, & Worobey and Worobey, 2013). Three samples were used throughout the study: one sample for a pilot testing of the questionnaire and two samples for a final testing of the questionnaire.

Pilot Study

The sample involved with the pilot testing of the questionnaire consisted of 20 parents or guardians aged 18 and older living in central Indiana with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old currently attending the Teddy Bear Child Care Center. The pilot study was conducted via a digital survey instrument sent to participants through their email accounts provided to the Teddy Bear Child Care Center. These emails were sent to prospective participants from Angela Gick, owner of Teddy Bear Child Care Center. The researcher obtained consent from all participants prior to their participation in the study.

Any parent or guardian aged 18 and older with a female child, or children, between the ages of 3 and 8 years old currently attending the Teddy Bear Child Care Center, no matter gender or race, was able to participate in the pilot study with informed consent. Participants of the pilot study were reminded of the study via email on a weekly basis after the original recruitment email was sent to gather data from 20 participants to measure the validity of the questionnaire.

Final Study

The two samples that participated in the final testing of the questionnaire consisted of 37 total parents or guardians aged 18 and older with a female child or children between the ages of 3

and 8 years old. The first sample of the final study consisted of 8 parents or guardians aged 18 and older with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old and were either a current faculty or staff member of a midwestern university or has a child/children currently enrolled at the same midwestern university's Child Study Center. The second sample of the final study consisted of 29 parents or guardians who were registered users of Amazon Mechanical Turk aged 18 and older with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8. The researcher obtained consent from all participants prior to their participation in the study.

The final study was conducted via a digital survey instrument sent to participants through a campus-wide email to faculty and staff, to patrons of the midwestern university's Child Study Center, and through Amazon Mechanical Turk. Two separate, anonymous links to the questionnaire were created: one for the final sample consisting of faculty and staff members of a midwestern university and patrons of the same university's Child Study Center, and one for registered users of Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Any parent or guardian aged 18 and older with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old and who was either a faculty or staff member of a midwestern university or had a child/children currently attending the same midwestern university's Child Study Center, no matter gender or race, was able to participate in the final study with informed consent.

In addition, any parent or guardian aged 18 and older with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old and who was a current, registered user of Amazon Mechanical Turk, no matter gender or race, was able to participate in the final study with informed consent.

For the final study, data from 37 participants was collected by means of digital survey. Participants consisted almost evenly between males and females (males, 51.4%; females, 48.6%), mostly between the ages of 18 and 30 years old (56.8%) with 35.1% between the ages of 31 and 43 years old and 8.1% between the ages of 44 and 56 years old. The majority of participants identified as non-Hispanic White/European American (48.6%) while other participants identified as Asian (29.7%), Hispanic (8.1%), and Native American (5.4%). 8.1% of participants either preferred not to specify their ethnicity or identified as multi-racial/multi-ethnic.

The majority of participants claimed to have at least one female child between the ages of 3 and 5 years old (63.8%) while 23.4% claimed to have at least one female child between the ages of 6 and 8 years old. 12.8% of participants claimed to have at least one female child younger than 2 years old or older than 8 years old. Responses received from participants who did not have at least one child between the ages of 3 and 8 years old were not recorded for this data analysis. Participants of the final study were reminded of the study via email on a weekly basis after the original recruitment email was sent in attempt to recruit more participants from non-respondents of the original recruitment email.

Instruments

An original survey created by the researcher was used to measure participants' perceptions of body image as illustrated by the original Barbie doll and the curvy, petite, and tall Barbie doll body styles. The original survey, titled "Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks" consisted of 34 questions separated into four sections: demographics, considerations of body image during toy selection/approval, Barbie doll body

shape, and the Barbie doll's new looks (Appendix B-1). The survey was designed to measure how heavily parents consider body image when purchasing toys, the perceptions of body image illustrated by the Barbie doll, and the perceptions of the Barbie doll's new looks. The researcher estimated a 10 to 15-minute time requirement to complete the survey. The "Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks" questionnaire was created on Qualtrics and distributed to participants via email and Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Pilot Study

A pilot test of the questionnaire was completed with a sample of 20 parents or guardians aged 18 and older with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old currently attending the Teddy Bear Child Care Center to test the validity and clarity of the questionnaire. Permission was obtained from the owner of the Teddy Bear Child Care Center, Angela Gick, prior to recruiting participants and conducting research for the pilot study. Questionnaires were given to participants via email, sent out by Angela Gick, containing a separate, anonymous link to the Qualtrics survey. The link to the questionnaire for the pilot study was independent of the links for the final study. Prospective participants were reminded on a weekly basis via email of the pilot study after the initial recruitment email was sent.

Responses to the questionnaire in the pilot study remained anonymous and were analyzed to ensure validity and clarity of the survey instrument. After obtaining responses from 20 participants for the pilot study version of the questionnaire, the survey responses obtained were coded and analyzed to determine what changes were necessary to improve the validity and clarity of the questionnaire.

Final Study

The final, modified, questionnaire consisted of 31 questions separated into four sections: demographics, considerations of body image during toy selection/approval, Barbie doll body shape, and the Barbie doll's new looks (Appendix B-2). To maintain internal consistency, several questions from the pilot questionnaire were removed (questions 18, 23, and 29) or were reversed in nature (ex. "I try to select toys..." modified to "I try to avoid toys...") (questions 9, 10, 12, 14, and 32). Minor grammatical changes were made to improve clarity within the survey.

The final survey was sent to two separate samples for a total of 37 participants. The first sample consisted of parents and guardians aged 18 and older with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old and were either a current faculty or staff member of a midwestern university or has a child, or children, currently enrolled at the same midwestern university's Child Study Center. This questionnaire was sent to faculty and staff members of a midwestern university via a campus-wide recruitment email containing an anonymous link to the final questionnaire. The second sample consisted of parents or guardians who were registered users of Amazon Mechanical Turk aged 18 and older with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8. This version of the final questionnaire was administered to participants via Amazon Mechanical Turk with a separate anonymous link.

Letter of Consent

Permission to conduct research was obtained from Angela Gick, owner and operator of the Teddy Bear Child Care Center, prior to beginning the pilot study (Appendix C-1 and C-2). Permission to conduct research was obtained from Jennifer Young, director of the Child Study Center, prior to beginning the final study (Appendix C-3). A letter of informed consent

describing the purpose, discomforts, and benefits of the study was provided to all participants prior to their participation in the study (Appendix C-4 and C-5).

Methods

The researcher conducting this study has completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative training (Appendix A-3) and received permission from the Institutional Review Board of a midwestern university before commencing the analysis (Appendix A-2).

Pilot Study

Prior to conducting the pilot study, Angela Gick of the Teddy Bear Child Care Center was contacted to obtain permission to conduct research with the patrons of the facility (Appendix C-1). Once permission to conduct research at the Teddy Bear Child Care Center was granted from Angela Gick (Appendix C-2), a recruitment email (Appendix D-1) describing the purpose of the study and requesting their participation in the pilot study was sent to patrons of the facility from Angela Gick via their email addresses provided to the facility. This email contained an anonymous link to the Qualtrics pilot version of the “Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks” questionnaire (Appendix B-1).

Prior to participating in the pilot testing of the “Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks” questionnaire, all participants were given a form of informed consent describing any possible discomforts and benefits from the survey. All surveys in the pilot test were distributed and collected electronically using Qualtrics. Participation in the survey was estimated to last 10 to 15 minutes. Surveys remained in distribution until the researcher collected data from at least 20 participants. A reminder email with the pilot test, anonymous

survey link was sent out on a weekly basis after the initial email requesting participation reminding participants of the survey and encouraging their participation.

Upon collection of 20 surveys, the researcher coded the data using Microsoft Excel. The coded data was then analyzed for reliability and validity. Based on the results from the pilot study, the survey was modified by removing several questions (questions 18, 23, and 29) and reversing the nature of others (questions 9, 10, 12, 14, and 32) in order to maintain internal consistency. Minor grammatical changes were also made to the survey to improve its clarity. Results collected from the pilot testing of the survey were used only to evaluate the clarity and validity of the questionnaire and were not reported in the results of the final study.

Final Study

Prior to conducting the final study, Jennifer Young was contacted to obtain permission to conduct research with patrons of a midwestern university facility (Appendix C-3). Once permission to conduct research was granted from Jennifer Young, a recruitment email (Appendix D-2) was sent to patrons of the Child Study center from Jennifer Young via their email addresses provided to the facility. This email contained an anonymous link to the Qualtrics final version of “Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks” questionnaire (Appendix B-2).

Participation in the final study was also requested from faculty and staff members of a midwestern university. University faculty and staff members were contacted campus wide via a recruitment email (Appendix D-2) sent from Megan Reid, Administrative Coordinator in the Department of Marketing. This email contained an anonymous link to the Qualtrics final version

of “Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks” questionnaire (Appendix B-2).

The recruitment letter sent via email to patrons of a midwestern university’s Child Study Center as well as the same university’s faculty and staff members described the purpose of the study, requested their participation in the survey, and provided a separate, anonymous URL link to the Qualtrics final version of the “Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks” questionnaire (Appendix B-2). Prior to participation in the final test of the “Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks” questionnaire, all participants were given a form of informed consent which described any possible discomforts and benefits from the survey. All surveys were distributed and collected electronically using Qualtrics. Participation in the survey was estimated to last between 10 and 15 minutes.

A reminder recruitment email with the anonymous survey link was sent to patrons of the Child Study Center and faculty and staff members of a midwestern university on a weekly basis after the initial recruitment email requesting participation to remind participants of the survey and encourage their participation.

Due to a low response rate from patrons of the Child Study Center and faculty and staff members from a midwestern university, a Modification Amendment form was submitted to the Institutional Review Board for permission to add to the sample of participants. This amendment proposed expanding the sample by utilizing Amazon Mechanical Turk to gather a total of 25 to 50 usable survey responses. A revised copy of the Informed Consent Form (Appendix C-5) was included with the Modification Amendment form to the Institutional Review Board. A copy of the Letter of Modification Approval can be found in Appendix A-2.

After approval for the modification to the protocol procedures was obtained from the Institutional Review Board was obtained, the Qualtrics final version of the survey was uploaded to Amazon Mechanical Turk. A separate anonymous link was created for the Amazon Mechanical Turk users. A revised copy of the Informed Consent Form was added to the Qualtrics final version of the survey for Amazon Mechanical Turks users. This copy of the Informed Consent Form included information regarding compensation for successful completion of the questionnaire.

Registered users of Amazon Mechanical Turk aged 18 years and older who were either a parent or guardian with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old was invited to participate in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was posted to Amazon Mechanical Turk which could be accessed by all registered users. Responses collected from participants who did not meet the survey requirements (aged younger than 18 years and/or did not have a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old) were not recorded in the final data analysis.

All participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk who successfully completed the survey were rewarded a 25-cent credit to their user accounts. A random, anonymous identification code was added to the Amazon Mechanical Turk Version of the Qualtrics questionnaire. This allowed participants to enter a randomized code into Amazon Mechanical Turk to receive their 25-cent credit anonymously upon completion. The researcher matched the surveys to the randomized codes received in Amazon Mechanical Turk to distribute the compensation credit as it was fairly earned.

The survey was posted to Amazon Mechanical Turk for two weeks. During this time, 29 complete and usable responses were obtained for a total of 37 responses from all three samples in

the final study. Upon collection of the 37 responses from all three samples in the final study, the researcher coded the data in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which was then uploaded in SPSS v.25.0 for Windows (SPSS, 2018). Results collected from the data analysis are recorded in Chapter 4, Results, to report parents' perceptions of body image illustrated by the Barbie doll and its new looks and to suggest body shape alterations to the Barbie doll to promote a more positive body image to their children.

Data Analysis

Data from the final test of the questionnaire was coded by the researcher in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which was then uploaded into SPSS v.25 for Windows (SPSS, 2018) for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, and frequency counts were run on all variables. Frequency counts (number and percent) were used to determine the overall prevalence of specific survey responses.

Nominal and ordinal data collected from individual survey responses was coded and analyzed using frequencies and descriptive statistics to describe participants and their perceptions of the four Barbie doll body shapes. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were then used to determine what changes should be made to the Barbie doll to promote a more positive body image according to the sample. Independent t-tests and Levene's Test for Equality of Variance were used to compare responses based on gender, age, and whether or not the participant was employed by the same midwestern university. Crosstabulations were used to determine frequencies within variables (gender, age, and employment). Statistical significance was set at $p \leq 0.05$.

Summary

This study was designed to better understand the perceptions of parents and guardians regarding the illustrated body image of the Barbie doll and its new looks. A pilot test of the “Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks” questionnaire was conducted with parents and guardians aged 18 and older with a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old currently attending the Teddy Bear Child Care Center. The data collected from this pilot test was used to evaluate the validity and clarity of the questionnaire. Modifications to the pilot questionnaire were made based on the data analysis from the pilot test.

A final test of the “Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks” questionnaire was conducted with three different samples including: patrons of the Child Study Center, faculty and staff members of a midwestern university, and registered users of Amazon Mechanical Turk for a total sample size of 37 participants. All participants must have been a parent or guardian aged 18 years and older with a female child, or children, between the ages of 3 and 8 years old.

The “Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks” questionnaire was designed to measure parents’ and guardians’ considerations of body image during toy selection/approval, perceptions of the original Barbie doll body shape, and perceptions of the Barbie doll’s new looks. The knowledge of how the Barbie doll’s body proportions are perceived by parents were then be used to determine what changes should be made to the current design of the Barbie doll to further create a positive influence on body image to children who are exposed to and playing with the Barbie doll.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this study is to understand parents' perceptions of body image as illustrated by the *Fashionista* Barbie doll body shapes. Also, if a more positive body image is needed, how the Barbie doll should be re-designed to promote a more positive body image to children. This study focuses on the traditional Barbie doll, as well as, the curvy, petite, and tall Barbie doll body shapes released by Mattel and how they are perceived by parents and guardians. This chapter presents the results of the study and answers the research questions raised previously.

Subjects

Participants for this study were recruited from faculty and staff members of a midwestern university, patrons of the same university's Child Study Center, and Amazon Mechanical Turk users. Responses from a total of 37 participants were collected for the final study. All participants were at least 18 years old and had at least one female child between the ages of 3 and 8 years old. Of the 37 participants in the final study, 18 were female (48.6%) and 19 were male (51.4%). Participants ranged between the ages of 18 and 56 years old with a majority of participants being between the ages of 18 and 30 years old ($f=21$, 56.8%), 13 participants between the ages of 31 and 43 years old (35.1%), and 3 participants between the ages of 44 and

56 years old (8.1%). 15 of 37 participants (40.5%) reported themselves as a faculty or staff member of the midwestern university while 21 (56.8%) were not affiliated with the university. One participant did not record whether or not he/she was a faculty or staff member of the midwestern university. 18 participants (48.6%) identified as Non-Hispanic, White/European American. Other ethnicities reported were 11 (29.7%) Asian, 3 (8.1%) Hispanic, 2 (5.4%) Native American, 1 (2.7%) Multiple/multi-racial/multi-ethnic, and 2 (5.4%) who preferred not to specify.

Participants were asked to take part in the original questionnaire titled, "Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks." The questionnaire was broken into four sections: demographics, considerations of body image during toy selection/approval, Barbie doll body shape, and the Barbie doll's new looks. In the sections regarding considerations of body image during toy selection/approval and the Barbie doll body shape, participants were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed (strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree) to the statements presented to them.

Perceptions were measured based on the extent which participants agreed or disagreed with the given statements. For example, when given the statement "I consider the original Barbie doll a positive influencer of body image for my child/children," 23 participants responded either somewhat agree or strongly agree. This was interpreted as the majority of participants having a positive perception of the Barbie doll and its influence on body image as most participants agreed to some extent that they consider the Barbie doll a positive influence on children's body image. An example of a perception interpreted to be negative is when participants were given the statement, "I believe the original Barbie doll looks too thin," 28 participants responded either somewhat agree or strongly agree. If participants responded with "neither agree or disagree," this

was interpreted as a neutral response or perception to the corresponding statement in the questionnaire.

Parents' Perceptions of the Original Barbie Doll and its Influence on Body Image

The first research question posed by the researcher considered how parents perceive the original Barbie doll and if they consider the Barbie doll a positive or negative influencer of body image to their children. Results from the questionnaire indicate that 62.1% of participants agreed to some extent when given the statement "I consider the original Barbie doll a positive influencer of body image for my child/children," 16.2% disagreed to some extent, and 21.6% were neutral on the matter (Mean 3.70, standard deviation 1.175). 48.6% of participants responded they agreed to some extent when given the statement "I do not consider the original Barbie doll a positive influencer of body image for my child/children," while 32.4% disagreed and 18.9% responded neutrally (Mean 3.16, standard deviation 1.280). Table 2 reports participants' responses to whether or not they considered the Barbie doll a positive influencer of body image.

Participants were also asked if they believed the original Barbie doll appeared too thin or if it appeared overweight. 75.6% of participants responded that they agreed to some extent that the Barbie doll looks too thin while 13.5% disagreed to some extent and 8.1% responded neutrally. When asked if they believed the original Barbie doll looks too overweight 62.1% disagreed that the doll looks too overweight, 21.6% agreed, and 13.5% responded neutrally (one response was missing). See Table 3 for results regarding participants' perceptions of the Barbie doll's weight.

When asked if the original Barbie promotes a positive body image to children, the majority of participants responded "yes," the Barbie doll does promote a positive body image ($f=22$,

59.5%). 14 (37.8%) participants responded “no,” the Barbie doll does not promote a positive body image. One response was missing to make up for the missing 2.7%.

Table 2. Do Parents Consider the Original Barbie Doll a Positive Influencer on Body Image?

I consider the original Barbie doll a positive influencer of body image for my child/children.

Mean = 3.70

Standard Deviation = 1.175

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	5.4
Somewhat Disagree	4	10.8
Neither Agree or Disagree	8	21.6
Somewhat Agree	12	32.4
Strongly Agree	11	29.7
Total	37	100.0

I do not consider the original Barbie doll a positive influencer of body image for my child/children.

Mean = 3.70

Standard Deviation = 1.175

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	5	13.5
Somewhat Disagree	7	18.9
Neither Agree or Disagree	7	18.9
Somewhat Agree	13	35.1
Strongly Agree	5	13.5
Total	37	100.0

Participants were also asked why they believed or did not believe the original Barbie promoted a positive body image to children. Responses varied from positive, neutral, and negative perceptions of the doll. Some of the anonymous responses include:

Positive Perceptions

- “The original Barbie doll has a positive influence of body image for my children. It looks beautiful. It is fun to play with. It could promote a healthy lifestyle including the importance of exercises and balanced diet.”
- “I think it could teach a girl how to dress nice and present herself well
- “Children often like Barbie doll because of the body shape which gives a positive attitude to the children”
- “It promotes a positive body image since the thinner you are, generally, the more attractive you seem to other people. Although, that does have its limits.”

Neutral Perceptions

- “I don't believe it does or doesn't promote a certain body image to certain.”
- “I think it promotes a general body image not too thin not too big and I don't think children are looking at how much the barbie weighs they are just playing with them.”
- “I think it's fine, I used to play with it and it did not give me issues.”

Negative Perceptions

- “The proportions are humanly impossible to replicate.”
- “It is not realistic--both in terms of body size but also style of dress and other physical elements. My children will not look like that and I don't want them glorifying a thin, uber feminine white woman. I want them to have more variety in their toys.”
- “Her proportions are very off.”

- “It makes [girls] think that they should be, or their body should be, a certain way to be beautiful or to fit in their environment.”
- “It gives girls a false sense of what they should look like and that original Barbie is not realistic.”
- “Her image suggests that to be pretty you must be thin and blonde.”

Table 3. Do Parents Consider the Original Barbie Doll too thin or too overweight?

I believe the original Barbie doll looks too thin.

Mean = 3.83

Standard Deviation = 1.159

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	3	8.1
Somewhat Disagree	2	5.4
Neither Agree or Disagree	3	8.1
Somewhat Agree	18	48.6
Strongly Agree	10	27.0
Missing	1	2.7
Total	37	100.0

I believe the original Barbie doll looks too overweight.

Mean = 2.11

Standard Deviation = 1.304

Response	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	18	48.6
Somewhat Disagree	5	13.5
Neither Agree or Disagree	5	13.5
Somewhat Agree	7	18.9
Strongly Agree	1	2.7
Missing	1	1
Total	37	100.0

Parents' Perceptions of the *Fashionistas* Barbie Doll Body Shapes and their Influence on Body Image

The second research question posed by the researcher considered how parents perceive the curvy, tall, and petite Barbie doll body shapes and if they considered these body shapes to be an

influence on body image to their children. When asked which Barbie doll body shape is the most positive influencer on body image, a majority of participants responded that the original ($f=15$, 40.5%) and curvy ($f=15$, 40.5%) Barbie dolls were the most positive influencers on body image. 4 participants (10.8%) selected the petite Barbie doll and 3 participants (8.1%) selected the tall Barbie doll as the most positive influence on body image. When asked which Barbie doll body shape is the least positive influence on body image, 12 participants (32.4%) chose the original Barbie doll, 10 (27.0%) chose the curvy, 9 (24.3%) chose the petite, and 6 (16.2%) chose the tall.

Perceptions of the Tall Barbie Doll and its influence on Body Image

Only 11 participants (39.7%) either strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that they would prefer their child play with a taller Barbie doll. The tall Barbie doll body shape was also the least likely to be purchased for participants' children. Only 3 participants (8.1%) stated that they would be most likely to purchase a tall Barbie doll for their children. Only 3 participants (8.1%) considered the tall Barbie doll to be the most positive influence on body image.

Perceptions of the Petite Barbie Doll and its influence on Body Image

12 participants (32.4%) agreed to some extent that they would prefer their children play with a shorter Barbie doll. However, only 4 participants (10.8%) believed the petite Barbie doll to be the most positive influence on body image. 5 participants (13.5%) said they were most likely to purchase the petite Barbie doll for their children.

Perceptions of the Curvy Barbie Doll and its influence on Body Image

The curvy Barbie doll matched the original Barbie doll in terms of being a positive influence on body image. 15 participants (40.5%) believed the curvy Barbie doll to be the most positive influence on body image, same as the original Barbie doll ($f=15$, 40.5%). The majority of participants also agreed to some extent that they would prefer their children play with a Barbie doll with a wider waist ($f=20$, 54%) and with wider hips ($f=17$, 45.9%). 14 participants (37.8%) also said that they would be most likely to purchase a curvy Barbie doll for their children.

Parents' Perceptions of the *Fashionistas* Barbie Doll Body Shapes and their Influence on Body Image Compared to the Original Barbie Doll

Based on the results of this study, the majority of participants agreed to some extent that the original Barbie doll was a positive influence on body image for their children ($f=23$, 62.1%). When compared to the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes presented in the *Fashionistas* collection, participants consider the original Barbie doll and the curvy Barbie doll to be the most positive influencers on body image (original Barbie doll $f=15$, 40.5%; curvy Barbie doll $f=15$, 40.5%). However, when asked which Barbie doll body shape is the least positive influence on children's body image, 12 participants (32.4%) selected the original Barbie doll body shape.

Influence of Parents' Perceptions of the Barbie Doll on Toy Purchase Decisions

Several statements were presented to participants to their considerations of body image when they are choosing toys for their children. Participants were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement with 5 (strongly agree) being in most agreement. Most participants ($f=26$, 70.2%) agreed to some extent that they try to avoid toys which they consider to be

negative role models for their children. However, 18 participants (48.6%) reported that they did not consider the influence of body image when selecting toys for their children. 29.7% of participants neither agreed or disagreed that they do not consider the influence of body image when selecting toys for their children.

When asked to consider if fashion dolls are perceived as a positive influence on body image to children, 19 participants (51.3%) agreed to some extent that they did not consider fashion dolls positive influences on body image while 18 participants (48.6%) agreed to some extent that they did consider fashion dolls positive influences on body image. 40.5% of participants responded neutrally when asked if they considered fashion dolls positive influences on body image for their children. A majority of participants ($f=23$, 62.1%) also stated that they agreed to some extent that they consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body to their children and that they would buy an original Barbie doll for their children ($f=26$, 70.2%). Only 8 participants (21.6%) strongly agreed that they would not buy an original Barbie doll for their children.

Future Changes to the Barbie Doll Body Shape to Increase Positive Body Image Influence to Children Based on Parents' Perceptions

The majority of participants ($f=22$, 59.5%) responded “yes” when asked “Do you believe the original Barbie doll promotes a positive body image to children?” However, based on results from questions regarding specific features of the Barbie doll, participants agreed that they were not completely satisfied with the Barbie doll’s physical appearance. 28 participants (75.6%) agreed to some extent that original Barbie doll looks too thin. Most participants ($f=17$, 45.9%) also agreed to some extent that they believed the Barbie doll appears too young. 20 participants

(54%) agreed to some extent that they would prefer their child played with a Barbie doll with a wider waist, 19 participants (54%) agreed to some extent that they would prefer their child played with a Barbie doll with a smaller chest, and 17 participants (45.9%) agreed they would prefer their child played with a Barbie doll with wider hips.

Participants responded neutrally regarding possible changes to the height of the doll. 51.4% neither agreed or disagreed that they would prefer their children played with a taller Barbie doll. 40.5% of participants neither agreed or disagreed that they would prefer their children played with a shorter Barbie doll.

Comparisons of Parents' Perceptions of the Barbie Doll

Comparisons of results were made based on gender, age, and employment with a midwestern University. These comparisons were made to determine if gender, age, or employment with the university influenced responses regarding participants' perceptions of the Barbie doll and its influence on body image to children. Independent t-tests and chi-squares were used to compare results. Table 4 provides data regarding the dispersion of participants based upon gender, age, and employment with a midwestern university.

Table 4. Crosstabulation of Gender, Age, and Employment

What is your age?			Are you a [Midwestern] University Faculty or Staff member?		Total
			Yes	No	
18-30	Please indicate your gender:	Female	7	7	14
		Male	4	3	7
	Total		11	10	21
31+	Please indicate your gender:	Female	1	3	4
		Male	3	8	11
	Total		4	11	15
Total	Please indicate your gender:	Female	8	10	18
		Male	7	11	18
	Total		15	21	36

Comparisons of Parents' Perceptions of the Barbie Doll Based on Gender

Of the 37 participants involved with the study, 18 (48.6%) identified as female and 19 (51.4%) identified as male. Gender did seem to effect how participants perceived the Barbie doll and its influence on body image. Male participants were in more agreement that they tried to avoid toys that they consider to be negative role models for their children ($n=19$, $\text{mean}=4.16\pm1.068$) than female participants ($n=17$, $\text{mean } 3.65\pm1.272$).

Results were also significantly different between genders when asked to consider if the original Barbie doll as a positive influence on body image ($t=2.918$, $p=.007$). Female participants agreed more ($n=18$, $\text{mean}=4.22\pm.647$) that the they consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image to the children than male participants ($n=19$, $\text{mean}=3.21\pm1.357$). 63.6% (14 of 22) of all participants who responded that the original Barbie doll promotes a positive body image were female. Of the responses from female participants, 77.8% (14 of 18) stated they consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image to their children. Only

36.4% (8 of 22) of all participants who considered the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image were male. Of the responses from male participants, 44.4% (8 of 18) stated they consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image to their children.

Male participants also disagreed more than female participants regarding the original Barbie doll appearing too overweight. Results were significantly different ($t=2.836$, $p=.008$) between male and female responses regarding the original Barbie doll appearing too overweight. Male participants disagreed more strongly ($n=19$, $\text{mean}=1.58\pm1.017$) than female participants ($n=17$, $\text{mean}=2.71\pm1.359$) that the original Barbie doll looks too overweight.

Regarding the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes of the *Fashionistas* Barbie doll line, 12 participants considered the original Barbie doll to be the least positive influence on body image. Of those 12 participants, 2 were female (16.7%) and 10 were male (83.3%). 10 participants considered the curvy Barbie doll the least positive influence on body image. Of the 10 participants who considered the curvy Barbie doll the least positive influence on body image, 8 were female (80.0%) and 2 were male (20.0%). Participants were also asked which Barbie doll body shape they were least likely to purchase for their children. 10 participants stated they were least likely to purchase the original Barbie doll for their children (2 females, 20.0%; 8 males, 80.0%). 11 participants said they were least likely to purchase the curvy Barbie doll for their children. 8 of those participants were female (72.7%) and 3 were male (27.3%).

There were no significant differences between genders and how participants would alter the size of the waist, height, chest, and hips of the original Barbie doll body shape to improve the doll's illustration of body image.

Comparisons of Parents' Perceptions of the Barbie Doll Based on Age

Age of participants also affected responses regarding the Barbie doll and its influence on children's body image. Results illustrate that older participants tend to have a more negative perception of the Barbie doll and its influence on body image. Results were significantly different between participants between the ages of 18 and 30 years old compared to participants aged 31 years and older. Participants aged 18 to 30 years old had a more positive perception of the original Barbie doll and agreed more that the original Barbie doll is a positive influence of body image than participants aged 31 years and older (see Table 5.)

Table 5. Comparisons of Original Barbie Doll Based on Age

Group Statistics				t-test for Equality of Means		
	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p
Age (years)				2.858	35	.007
18-30	21	4.14	.854			
30+	16	3.13	1.310			

Participants over 31 years old also responded “no” more frequently when asked if they believed the original Barbie doll promotes a positive body image. 60.0% of participants older than 31 years old said the Barbie doll does not promote a positive body image. In comparison, only 23.8% of participants between the ages of 18 and 30 years old said that the original Barbie does not promote a positive body image.

Regarding how participants would alter the original Barbie doll body shape to improve the doll's influence on body image, results were statistically significant ($t=3.874$, $p=.000$) between age groups and the chest size of the original Barbie doll. Participants between the ages of 18 and 31 years old responded more in favor of their children playing with a Barbie doll with

a larger chest ($n=21$, $\text{mean}=3.62\pm.921$). Responses from participants over the age of 31 years old were less favorable of their children playing with a Barbie doll with a larger chest ($n=16$, $\text{mean}=2.19\pm1.328$).

When asked to consider the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes of the *Fashionistas* collection, participants considered both the original Barbie doll and the curvy Barbie doll to be the most positive influences on body image. However, variance in responses is seen between body shape and age. More participants who selected the original Barbie doll as the most positive influence on body image were between the ages of 18 and 30 years old (66.7%). Of the participants who selected the curvy Barbie doll as the most positive influence on body image ($n=15$), 60.0% were over the age of 31 years old. Responses to which Barbie doll body shape is the least positive influence on body image support these results. When asked which Barbie doll body shape is the least positive influence on body image, 12 participants selected the original Barbie doll with 66.7% of these responses being from participants over the age of 31 years old. 10 participants selected the curvy Barbie doll with 60.0% of these responses being from participants between 18 and 30 years old.

Participants were also asked to consider which of the Barbie doll body shapes they were most likely to purchase for their children. 15 participants selected the original Barbie doll and 14 participants selected the curvy Barbie doll. Of the 15 participants who selected the original Barbie as the most likely to purchase for their children, 10 (66.7%) were between the ages of 18 and 30 years old. Responses from those who would purchase the curvy Barbie doll were split evenly between the two age groups (18-30, $n=7$, 50.0%; 31+, $n=7$, 50.0%).

Comparisons of Parents' Perceptions of the Barbie Doll Based on Place of Employment

Response from the questionnaire were also compared based upon whether or not the participant was employed at a midwestern university. Statistics were significantly different between employment regarding whether or not the participant considered the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image ($t=3.698$, $p=.000$). Those who responded that they were currently employed at a midwestern university agreed more that they did not consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image ($n=15$, $\text{mean}=4.00\pm.845$) than participants who were not employed at the university ($n=21$, $\text{mean}=2.67\pm1.197$).

In support of most university employees agreeing that they do not consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image, university employees also agreed more often that they were less likely to purchase an original Barbie doll for their children ($n=15$, $\text{mean}=3.27\pm1.280$) than those not employed at the university ($n=21$, $\text{mean}=2.14\pm1.236$) ($t=2.650$, $p=.012$).

Results were also significant regarding how old the Barbie doll looks to participants based on their employment ($t=3.244$, $p=.003$). Participants employed at the midwestern university agreed more often that the original Barbie doll appears too old ($n=15$, $\text{mean}=3.20\pm1.207$) while those not employed at the university did not agree as often that that original Barbie doll looks too old ($n=21$, $\text{mean}=1.86\pm1.236$).

When asked to consider the body styles of the *Fashionistas* collection, 14 participants believed the original Barbie doll promoted the most positive body image. Of these 14 participants, 6 (42.9%) were employed at the midwestern university and 8 (57.1%) were not employed at the university. 15 participants responded that the curvy Barbie doll was the most

positive influence on body image. 6 of these 15 participants (40.0%) were university employees and 9 (60.0%) were not.

Participants were also asked which Barbie doll body styles they were most likely and least likely to purchase for their children. 14 participants responded that they were most likely to purchase the original Barbie doll for their children. Of these 14 participants, 5 (35.7%) were employed by a midwestern university and 9 (64.3%) were not. There were also 14 participants who responded that they were most likely to purchase the curvy Barbie doll for their children. Of the 14 participants who selected the curvy Barbie doll, 8 (57.1%) were employed at the university and 6 (42.9%) were not. Participants responded they were least likely to purchase the original ($f=10$), curvy ($f=10$), or tall ($f=10$) Barbie doll body shapes. 3 participants (30.0%) who selected the original Barbie doll as the least likely to purchase were university employees and 7 (70.0%) were not. 6 participants (60.0%) who selected the curvy Barbie doll as the least likely to purchase were university employees and 4 (40.0%) were not. Those who selected the tall Barbie doll as the least likely to purchase were split evenly between university employees ($f=5$, 50.0%) and non-university employees ($f=5$, 50.0%).

Employment with the midwestern university did not seem to have an effect on how participants would alter the size of the waist, height, chest, and hips of the original Barbie doll body shape to improve the doll's illustration of body image to children.

Summary

Subjects for this study were recruited from faculty and staff members of a midwestern university, patrons of the same university's Child Study Center, and Amazon Mechanical Turk users. Responses from a total of 37 participants were collected for the final study. All

participants were at least 18 years old and had at least one female child between the ages of 3 and 8 years old. Results from this study indicate that most of the participants consider the original Barbie doll to be a positive influence on body image to their children; however, based on quantitative and qualitative responses, there are still changes they would make to the original body shape. 75.6% of participants agreed that the Barbie doll looks too thin and that they would prefer their children play with a doll illustrating a wider waist, wider hips, and/or a smaller chest. Participants selected the original and curvy Barbie doll body shapes most frequently as the most positive influence on body image to children and as the most likely to purchase. Comparative statistics indicate that female participants agree more than male participants that the original Barbie doll is a positive influence on body image. Participants between the ages of 18 and 30 also had a most positive perception of the original Barbie doll than those older than 31 years old. Participants who were employed at a midwestern university agreed more that they did not consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image and that they were less likely to purchase an original Barbie doll for their children than those who are not affiliated with the midwestern university.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to understand parents' perceptions of body image as illustrated by the *Fashionista* Barbie doll body shapes. Also, if a more positive body image is needed, how the Barbie doll should be re-designed to promote a more positive body image to children. This chapter presents a discussion of the results of this study in comparison to previous research regarding the Barbie doll and its influence on body image.

Sample Selection

Previous studies analyzing influence on body image and body dissatisfaction have focused on adult subjects rather than children (Dittmar et al., 2006) despite children often being at a higher risk of experiencing body dissatisfaction based on their greater susceptibility to their surroundings (Anshchutz & Engels, 2010). For the purpose of this study, parents were asked to participate in a questionnaire, but were asked to consider the influence of the Barbie doll on their children's body image rather than their own. Collecting responses from parents rather than children was utilized due to parents being gatekeepers and making the ultimate decision of with which toys their children can play.

Parents' Perceptions of the Original Barbie Doll and its Influence on Body Image

Results from this study indicate that 62.1% of participants agreed to some extent that they consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image to their children while 48.6% agreed to some extent that they did not consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image to their children. Results from a previous study completed by Starr and Ferguson (2012) illustrate that young girls experience body dissatisfaction when exposed to fashion dolls as they are viewing their actual-selves as non-sexualized and desiring a sexualized model for their ideal selves. These conflicting results between the adult participants in this study and children participants in Starr and Ferguson's study suggest that perhaps parents are not realizing to what extent fashion dolls, specifically the Barbie doll, are influencing their children's body dissatisfaction and body image.

Past and present criticisms have been made about the original Barbie doll's body shape. Accounts collected from this study regarding whether or not the original Barbie doll promotes a positive body image were varied amongst positive, neutral, and negative perceptions. Forman-Brunell (2009) previously discussed the varied perceptions of the Barbie doll as well.

Accounts of Positive Perceptions

- "The original Barbie doll has a positive influence of body image for my children. It looks beautiful. It is fun to play with. It could promote a healthy lifestyle including the importance of exercises and balanced diet." (account from current study)
- "[An] idol of American femininity [and] a symbol of female liberation." (accounts from Forman-Brunell, 2009)

- “[The Barbie doll] promotes a positive body image since the thinner you are, generally, the more attractive you seem to other people. Although, that does have its limits.”
(account from current study)
- “[A] personification of changing feminine ideals and a perpetuation of traditional notions of gender.” (account from Forman-Brunell, 2009)

Accounts of Neutral Perceptions

- “I don't believe it does or doesn't promote a certain body image to certain.” (account from current study)
- “I think it promotes a general body image not too thin not too big and I don't think children are looking at how much the barbie weighs they are just playing with them.”
(account from current study)
- “I think it's fine, I used to play with it and it did not give me issues.” (account from current study)

Accounts of Negative Perceptions

- “Her image suggests that to be pretty you must be thin and blonde.” (account from current study)
- “[Barbie is] typically received as a blonde bimbo.” (account from Forman-Brunell, 2009)
- “It is not realistic--both in terms of body size but also style of dress and other physical elements. My children will not look like that and I don't want them glorifying a thin, uber feminine white woman. I want them to have more variety in their toys.” (account from current study)

- Barbie doll described as “an agent of female oppression.” (account from Forman-Brunell, 2009)

Based on positive perceptions of the original Barbie doll from this study and from previous studies, it may be assumed that some parents believe the original Barbie doll to be a positive influence on their children because of the association of positive personality traits with physical attractiveness and the idea of “she can do anything” promotes the doll’s encouragement of female empowerment. Some also believe the doll promotes a healthy lifestyle of exercise and balanced diet to maintain physical fitness. Parents with negative perceptions of the original Barbie doll and its influence on body shape seem to believe that the doll is a poor model for women and does not encourage female empowerment by suggesting physical attractiveness should be girls’ main concern in life. Other negative responses suggest that parents do not appreciate the unrealistic physical expectations the doll illustrates to their children.

The researcher originally assumed that parents would have either a positive or negative perception of the Barbie doll and its influence on children’s body image. Results indicate that some parents do have neutral perceptions regarding the Barbie doll and its influence on body image. Some parents do not seem to believe that toys have an influence on children’s body image and that children are simply playing with and enjoying the toy. Other neutral responses suggest that parents base the doll’s influence on body image from their personal experiences with the Barbie doll. If they did not feel as though the doll influenced their own body image as a child, they assume it is the same for their children.

Parents' Perceptions of the *Fashionistas* Barbie Doll Body Shapes and their Influence on Body Image

A goal of this study was to better understand parents' perceptions of the curvy, petite, and tall Barbie doll body shapes presented by Mattel in the *Fashionistas* line and their influence on children's body image. Based on the results of this study, 40.5% of participants believed the original Barbie doll to be the most positive influence on body image. Participants claimed that the original Barbie doll "promotes a positive body image since the thinner you are, generally, the more attractive you seem to other people," and "looks beautiful," and "promotes a healthy lifestyle." A previous study by Worobey and Worobey (2013) found similar results when they presented girls between the ages of three and a half to five and a half years old with fashion dolls of various body shapes and asked the participants to assign personality traits to individual dolls based on body shape. The study by Worobey and Worobey (2013) resulted with most of the positive personality traits being associated with the thinnest doll while the negative traits were generally associated with the plus-sized doll.

Another 40.5% of participants believed the curvy Barbie doll body shape to be the most positive influence on body image. Consequently, the curvy Barbie doll was also reported by Kim Culmone, Vice President of Barbie Design, as the number one selling doll in the *Fashionistas* line in 2017 (Sax, 2018).

Participants were also asked which Barbie doll body shape they considered to be the least positive influence on body image. 32.4% of participants selected the original Barbie doll as the least positive influence on body image, 27.0% selected the curvy Barbie doll, 24.3% selected the petite Barbie doll, and 16.2% selected the tall Barbie doll. These results compared to those participants who were asked which Barbie doll body shape was the most positive influence on

body image. This suggests that there are still variances between perceptions of the body shapes. Some parents still prefer the original Barbie doll, perhaps due to nostalgia or a belief that your body shape influences how you are perceived by others, while others are welcoming the change of the doll's body shape and the inclusion of new shapes, sizes, and other physical features.

Parents' Perceptions of the *Fashionistas* Barbie Doll Body Shapes and their Influence on Body Image Compared to the Original Barbie Doll

Previous studies, such as that by Anschutz and Engels (2010), support the idea that the size and body shape of fashion dolls influence body dissatisfaction in young children. This study sought to find out if parents agree with these results and how they perceive the curvy, petite, and tall Barbie doll body shapes compared to the original Barbie doll body shape. As previously mentioned, the majority of participants (62.1%) in this study believed that the original Barbie doll is a positive influence on body image for their children. However, results were divided evenly between the original (40.5%) and curvy (40.5%) Barbie doll body shapes being selected as the most positive influence on body image. This suggests that the popularity of the curvy Barbie doll body shape is equally as popular as the original Barbie doll and is being received positively by some parents and guardians of young children.

Influence of Parents' Perceptions of the Barbie Doll on Toy Purchase Decisions

According to the results of this study, most parents (70.2%) agree that they try to avoid toys which they consider to be negative role models for their children. Previous research agrees that toys influence a child's development and growth (Kabadayi, 2014) and should be selected based upon their influence during various stages of children's development (Oravec, 2000).

Research from Dittmar et al. (2006) supports the influence of body shape on children's body dissatisfaction. Findings from this research illustrate that children's body dissatisfaction was higher in children exposed to the Barbie doll compared to those exposed to an Emme doll (a fashion doll with a more average body shape). Mattel was motivated to create the *Fashionistas* Barbie doll collection partially to appeal to parents' desires to select a doll that they can consider a positive role model for their children (Fisher, 2016).

While 70.2% of parents agreed in this study that they generally try to avoid toys which they consider negative role models for their children, 48.6% also reported that they do not necessarily consider the influence of body image in their toy selection and approval. More participants (48.6%) did agree that they did not consider fashion dolls positive influences on body image. Previous accounts have given criticisms to dolls, such as the Bratz dolls, appearing too sexualized for their adolescent figures (Levine & Kilbourne, 2008). Previous criticisms of the Barbie doll consider it a poor role model for children as Barbie is often regarded as a "blonde bimbo" (Forman-Brunell, 2009) and that it illustrates an unhealthy, unattainable body shape which can cause body dissatisfaction in young children (Dittmar et al., 2006). It should also be noted that some participants from this study had neutral perceptions regarding the consideration of body image during toy selection (29.7%) and the influence fashion dolls have on children's body image (40.5%).

A total of 62.1% of participants from this study agreed that they consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on their children's body image and 70.2% agreed that they would buy an original Barbie doll for their children. Only 8 participants (21.6%) said they would not buy an original Barbie doll for their children. Rice et al. (2016) questioned how the Barbie doll influenced children's thin-ideal internalization, body esteem, and body dissatisfaction. They

found that exposure to the Barbie doll led to a higher thin-ideal internalization but did not necessarily have a negative effect on body esteem or body dissatisfaction. Based on the results of this study, parents are concerned about selecting toys that are positive role models for their children, but do not necessarily consider all of the effects the Barbie doll body shape can have on their children's body image and body dissatisfaction.

Future Changes to the Barbie Doll Body Shape to Increase Positive Body Image Influence on Children Based on Parents' Perceptions

While most participants (62.1%) from this study agreed that the Barbie doll promotes a positive body image to their children, they do not seem to be completely satisfied with the overall body shape of the doll. Most parents (75.6%) reported that they agreed the original Barbie doll looks too thin. Other changes participants said they would like to see in the Barbie doll include: a wider waist (54%), a smaller chest (54%), and wider hips (45.9%). 45.9% of participants from this study also agreed that the Barbie appears too young. When the Barbie doll appears too young, it is appealing to a younger audience (Forman-Brunell, 2009) and contributes to the idea of "kids growing older younger" (Shales, 2007). Kim Culmone, Vice President of Barbie Design, mentioned that with the *Fashionistas* line Mattel wanted to show customers that the company is listening to criticisms and desires from consumers about the Barbie doll body shape and features (Mallenbaum, 2018).

Comparisons of Parents' Perceptions of the Barbie Doll

This study also compared parent's perceptions of the Barbie doll and its influence on children's body image based on gender, age, and employment with a midwestern university.

Results indicated that men are more likely (mean=4.16±.245) to avoid toys they consider to be negative role models for their children than women (mean=3.65±1.272). Men also disagreed more often (mean=1.58±1.017) than women (mean=2.71±1.359) that the original Barbie doll looks too overweight. Women agreed more (mean=4.22±.647) than men (mean=3.21±1.357) that they consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image to their children. When comparing preferred body shapes of the Barbie doll, more men considered the original Barbie doll to be the least positive influence on body image (52.6% of men) while more women considered the curvy Barbie doll to be the least positive influence on body image (44.4% of women).

Results from this study also indicated that age of the participants had an impact on perceptions of the Barbie doll, the four body shapes, and their influence on children's body image. Participants between the ages of 18 and 30 years old generally had a more positive perception of the original Barbie doll and agreed more often (mean=4.14±.854) that the original Barbie doll is a positive influence on body image. Participants aged 31 years and older responded more frequently (mean=2.75±1.2961) that they did not consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image. Younger participants were also in disagreement with older participants regarding specific features of the Barbie doll's body shape. More participants between the ages of 18 and 30 years old (mean3.62±.921) were in favor of their children playing with a Barbie doll with a larger chest while participants older than 31 years old said they would prefer their children play with a Barbie doll with a smaller chest (mean3.13±1.586).

When asked to consider the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes presented in the *Fashionistas* line, most of the responses that considered the original Barbie doll to be the most positive influence on body image were from participants between the ages of 18 and 30 years old

(47.6%). Comparatively, most of the responses that considered the curvy Barbie doll to be the most positive influence on body image were from participants over the age of 31 years old (56.3%). When asked which Barbie doll body shape is the least positive influence on body image, more participants who chose the original Barbie doll were older than 31 years old (50.0%).

Employment with a midwestern university also seemed to influence perceptions of the Barbie doll and its influence on body image. Based on results from the questionnaire, participants from the midwestern university generally had a more negative perception of the original Barbie doll body shape. Participants currently employed by the midwestern university were generally more in agreement ($\text{mean}=4.00\pm.845$) that they did not consider the original Barbie doll to be a positive influence on body image compared to participants who were not employed with the midwestern university. University employees were also less likely to purchase an original Barbie doll for their children ($\text{mean}=3.27\pm1.280$).

Summary

The study presented in this project attempted to better understand parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll and its new looks presented in the *Fashionistas* collection and how they influenced children's body image. Although most participants (62.1%) agreed to consider the Barbie doll a positive influence on body image, results also show that participants are not entirely happy with the original Barbie doll body shape and that there are changes they would make to make the doll a more positive influence on body image. Previous research shows that young children are susceptible to experiencing body dissatisfaction and that the body shape of fashion dolls influences children's body image and body satisfaction. According to results from

this study, 70.2% of parents try to avoid toys which they consider to be negative role models to their children but do not always consider body image when selecting toys for their children. While the original Barbie doll remains a popular and approved choice by parents, the curvy Barbie doll seems to be equally accepted by parents.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study is to understand parents' perceptions of body image as illustrated by the *Fashionista* Barbie doll body shapes. Also, if a more positive body image is needed, how the Barbie doll should be re-designed to promote a more positive body image to children. This chapter presents conclusions drawn from the results of this study as well as recommendations for future research.

Conclusions

This study involved a questionnaire designed to understand parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll and its new looks and if they promote a positive body image to children. Results from this study indicate that many parents and guardians of girls between the ages of 3 and 8 years old do consider that original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image (62.1%). The researcher believes that this is partially due to people often associating positive character traits with physical attractiveness as determined by societal standards. Positive traits were often associated with the original Barbie doll by participants in this study such as, "it looks beautiful, it is fun to play with, [and] it could promote a healthy lifestyle," "it could teach a girl how to dress nice[ly] and present herself well," and "it promotes a positive body image since the thinner you are, generally, the more attractive you seem." Another explanation to the number of participants

who considered the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image is nostalgia. The Barbie doll has been the most popular fashion doll since its creation in 1959. Participants in this study likely grew up with the original Barbie doll and still have fond memories and emotions associated with the doll.

A majority of participants (70.2%) also agreed that they would buy an original Barbie doll for their children. However, results also indicate that parents and guardians are not entirely satisfied with the overall body shape of the original Barbie doll. Participants reported that they would like their children to play with a Barbie doll with a wider waist (54%), wider hips (45.9%), and a smaller chest (54%). The curvy Barbie doll was considered the most positive influence on body image as frequently as the original Barbie doll ($f=14$, 40.5%) and almost as frequently chosen as the body shape which parents were most likely to purchase for their children (original Barbie doll: $f=15$, 40.5%; curvy Barbie doll: $f=14$, 37.8%). The preference for the original Barbie doll could again be explained by nostalgia and parents wanting their children to grow up with the same Barbie doll they had when they were kids. Parents may also be influenced by their children asking for a specific Barbie doll and allowing them to choose the doll themselves. Preferences for the curvy Barbie doll illustrate that parents want their children to grow up with the Barbie doll but are likely concerned about the doll's influence on body shape.

Previous research tells us that the body shape of fashion dolls influences children's body dissatisfaction and ideal-self internalization and affects children of younger ages than previously believed. Most participants from this study agree that they try to avoid toys which they believe to be negative role models to their children; however, they do not always consider a toy's influence on body image during their toy selection. Those who do not consider body image during toy

selection may not fully understand the affect the doll's body shape is having on their children's body image. While participants in this study generally do believe the original Barbie doll to be a positive influence on body image, 32.4% said they would not buy an original Barbie doll for their children.

There were also equal responses between the original and curvy Barbie doll body shapes regarding which doll participants considered to be the most positive influence on body image, which doll participants considered to be the least positive influence on body image, and which doll participants were most likely to purchase for their children. Some participants were neutral regarding their consideration of body image when selecting toys and their perceptions of the original Barbie doll. These results tell us that perceptions of the original Barbie doll compared to the curvy, petite, and tall Barbie dolls are varied and that perhaps parents prefer having the choice of the inclusive physical features in the *Fashionistas* collection.

Comparative statistics demonstrated variances in responses based on gender, age, and employment with a midwestern university. These characteristics influenced how the original Barbie doll was perceived as an influence on body image to children, how the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes were perceived compared to the original Barbie doll, and which body shape participants were most likely to purchase for their children. Gender stereotypes, such as a father often preferring their daughter to be more modest, likely influence parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll. Generational differences would also likely influence how parents perceive body shape in general as well as regarding fashion dolls. Older generations would likely prefer more modest role models than those younger. Employment with a midwestern university may offer further knowledge and more resources to how children's body image is influenced by media and the body shapes of fashion dolls.

Limitations

As the reader examines the results of this research, the following limitations must be taken into consideration:

- This study examined how parents and guardians of girls between the ages of 3 and 8 years old perceive the original Barbie doll and the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes in the *Fashionistas* collection rather than analyzing how the original Barbie doll and the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes are actually affecting young girls between the ages of 3 and 8 years old.
- Due to the small sample size and use of a convenience sample, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the greater population.
- Parents perceptions and beliefs as reported in the results may differ from their actual actions.
- Despite efforts by the researcher and a pilot test of the questionnaire to test for clarity, some participants may have had difficulty comprehending the final questionnaire. For example, 16.2% of participants disagreed that the original Barbie doll is a positive influence on body image in one question, while in a separate question, 48.6% agreed that the Barbie doll is not a positive influence on body image. With improved clarity in the survey instrument, these results should be similar if not the same between the two questions.
- Due to a low response rate from the original proposed sample, the sample had to be expanded to users of Amazon Mechanical Turk which may have introduced language barriers and cultural differences which could affect the final results.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the results of the present study, additional research regarding perceptions of the original Barbie doll as well as the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes and their influence on body image should be conducted to better understand the dolls' influence on body image in children.

The following suggestions are made for future research:

- Use the information and results obtained from the current pilot study as baseline data to strengthen results and gain a better understanding of parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll and the *Fashionistas* collection.
- Increase the sample size to improve statistical power and to generalize more to the larger population.
- Work closely with a community or university location to form relationships with administrators and clients to gain better access to an appropriate study population.
- Provide compensation for participation in the study to receive a more reliable response rate in a shorter span of time.
- Focus on variations in parents' perceptions based upon different geographical locations and the varying cultures within those locations.
- Work with a sample of female children between the ages of 3 and 8 years old rather than their parents to gain an understanding of how the original Barbie doll as well as the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes are influencing these children rather than how parents perceive the dolls to influence their children.
- Focus on the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes presented in the *Fashionistas* collection and include additions made to body shapes and features as Mattel continues to evolve the *Fashionistas* collection.

- Compare new and upcoming *Fashionistas* Barbie dolls as more body shapes and physical features are added to the *Fashionistas* collection and their influence on children's body image.

Summary

This study examined parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll and its new looks and their influence on body image to children. Results from the study indicate that most participants consider the original Barbie doll a positive influence on body image, most likely due to the association of positive character traits with physical attractiveness or nostalgia. However, parents would also like to see changes to the original body shape when asked about specific features. The most notable limitations of this study are in the sample size and using a sample of parents rather than young girls to determine perceptions of the original Barbie doll as well as the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes in the *Fashionistas* collection. The present study provides a good indication of perceptions of the curvy, petite, and tall body shapes compared to those regarding the original Barbie doll and suggest that future research could be conducted to better understand the perceptions and acceptance of a more inclusive fashion doll. Future research is needed to best understand parents' perceptions of the *Fashionistas* Barbie doll body shapes and their influence on children's body image.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD MATERIALS

CITI CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION

Appendix A-1 – IRB Letter of Approval



Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
2000 University Avenue
Muncie, IN 47306-0155
Phone: 765-285-5070

DATE: October 5, 2017
TO: Grace Douglas
FROM: Ball State University IRB
RE: IRB protocol # 1100252-1
TITLE: Parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll's new looks
SUBMISSION TYPE: New Project
ACTION: APPROVED
DECISION DATE: October 5, 2017
REVIEW TYPE: EXEMPT

The Institutional Review Board reviewed your protocol on October 5, 2017 and has determined the procedures you have proposed are appropriate for exemption under the federal regulations. As such, there will be no further review of your protocol, and you are cleared to proceed with the procedures outlined in your protocol. As an exempt study, there is no requirement for continuing review. Your protocol will remain on file with the IRB as a matter of record.

Exempt Categories:

	Category 1: Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
X	Category 2: Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior
	Category 3: Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under category 2, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
	Category 4: Research involving the collection of study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

	Category 5: Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under these programs.
	Category 6: Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed which contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Editorial Notes:

1. N/A

While your project does not require continuing review, it is the responsibility of the P.I. (and, if applicable, faculty supervisor) to inform the IRB if the procedures presented in this protocol are to be modified or if problems related to human research participants arise in connection with this project. **Any procedural modifications must be evaluated by the IRB before being implemented, as some modifications may change the review status of this project.** Please contact (ORI Staff) if you are unsure whether your proposed modification requires review or have any questions. Proposed modifications should be addressed in writing and submitted electronically to the IRB (<http://www.bsu.edu/irb>) for review. Please reference the above IRB protocol number in any communication to the IRB regarding this project.

Reminder: Even though your study is exempt from the relevant federal regulations of the Common Rule (45 CFR 46, subpart A), you and your research team are not exempt from ethical research practices and should therefore employ all protections for your participants and their data which are appropriate to your project.

D. Clark Dickin, PhD/Chair
Institutional Review Board

Christopher Mangelli, JD, MS, MEd, CIP/
Director
Office of Research Integrity

Appendix A-2 – IRB Letter of Modification Approval



Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
2000 University Avenue
Muncie, IN 47306-0155
Phone: 765-285-5070

DATE: August 1, 2018
TO: Grace Douglas
FROM: Ball State University IRB
RE: IRB protocol # 1100252-2
TITLE: Parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll's new looks
SUBMISSION TYPE: Amendment/Modification
ACTION: APPROVED
DECISION DATE:
REVIEW TYPE: EXEMPT

The Institutional Review Board reviewed your protocol on and has determined the procedures you have proposed are appropriate for exemption under the federal regulations. As such, there will be no further review of your protocol, and you are cleared to proceed with the procedures outlined in your protocol. As an exempt study, there is no requirement for continuing review. Your protocol will remain on file with the IRB as a matter of record.

Exempt Categories:

	Category 1: Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices, such as (i) research on regular and special education instructional strategies, or (ii) research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
X	Category 2: Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior
	Category 3: Research involving the use of educational test (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior that is not exempt under category 2, if: (i) the human subjects are elected or appointed officials or candidates for public office; or (ii) Federal statute(s) require(s) without exception that the confidentiality of the personally identifiable information will be maintained throughout the research and thereafter.
	Category 4: Research involving the collection of study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

	Category 5: Research and demonstration projects which are conducted by or subject to the approval of Department or agency heads, and which are designed to study, evaluate or otherwise examine: (i) public benefit or service programs; (ii) procedures for obtaining benefits or services under those programs; (iii) possible changes in methods or levels of payment for benefits or services under these programs.
	Category 6: Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed which contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

While your project does not require continuing review, it is the responsibility of the P.I. (and, if applicable, faculty supervisor) to inform the IRB if the procedures presented in this protocol are to be modified or if problems related to human research participants arise in connection with this project. **Any procedural modifications must be evaluated by the IRB before being implemented, as some modifications may change the review status of this project.** Please contact (ORI Staff) if you are unsure whether your proposed modification requires review or have any questions. Proposed modifications should be addressed in writing and submitted electronically to the IRB (<http://www.bsu.edu/irb>) for review. Please reference the above IRB protocol number in any communication to the IRB regarding this project.

Reminder: Even though your study is exempt from the relevant federal regulations of the Common Rule (45 CFR 46, subpart A), you and your research team are not exempt from ethical research practices and should therefore employ all protections for your participants and their data which are appropriate to your project.

D. Clark Dickin, PhD/Chair
Institutional Review Board

Christopher Mangelli, JD, MS, MEd, CIP/
Director
Office of Research Integrity

Appendix A-3 – CITI Certificate of Completion

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2 COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Grace Douglas (ID: 4304398)
- **Institution Affiliation:** Ball State University (ID: 1568)
- **Institution Email:** gadouglas@bsu.edu
- **Institution Unit:** Family and Consumer Sciences
- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Same as Curriculum Group
- **Stage:** Stage 2 - Refresher Course
- **Description:** Choose this group to satisfy CITI training requirements for Investigators and staff involved primarily in Social/Behavioral Research with human subjects.
- **Record ID:** 24023407
- **Completion Date:** 17-Aug-2017
- **Expiration Date:** 16-Aug-2020
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score*:** 100

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY	DATE COMPLETED	SCORE
SBE Refresher 1 – Instructions (ID: 943)	17-Aug-2017	No Quiz
SBE Refresher 1 – History and Ethical Principles (ID: 936)	17-Aug-2017	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Federal Regulations for Protecting Research Subjects (ID: 937)	17-Aug-2017	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Informed Consent (ID: 938)	17-Aug-2017	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Defining Research with Human Subjects (ID: 15029)	17-Aug-2017	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Privacy and Confidentiality (ID: 15035)	17-Aug-2017	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Assessing Risk (ID: 15034)	17-Aug-2017	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Research with Prisoners (ID: 939)	17-Aug-2017	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Research with Children (ID: 15036)	17-Aug-2017	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – Research in Educational Settings (ID: 940)	17-Aug-2017	2/2 (100%)
SBE Refresher 1 – International Research (ID: 15028)	17-Aug-2017	2/2 (100%)
Ball State University (ID: 13475)	17-Aug-2017	No Quiz

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing Institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: www.citiprogram.org/verify/7k1ba96a36-3193-4d02-bb99-58aedc7bc68b-24023407

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)

Email: support@citiprogram.org

Phone: 888-529-5929

Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Appendix B-1 - Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks
Pilot Questionnaire

**PERCEPTIONS OF BODY IMAGE ILLUSTRATED BY THE BARBIE DOLL AND ITS
NEW LOOKS**

Demographics

1. What is your age?
 - a. Younger than 18
 - b. 18-30
 - c. 31-43
 - d. 44-56
 - e. 57+

****If you selected "a. younger than 18" please skip to the end of the survey. Thank you for your time.*

2. Are you the parent or guardian of at least one female child?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

****If you selected "b. No" please skip to the end of the survey. Thank you for your time.*

3. How old is your female child/children? (select all that apply)
 - a. 0-2
 - b. 3-5
 - c. 6-8
 - d. 9+

****If you selected "d. 9+" please skip to the end of the survey. Thank you for your time.*

4. Have you previously participated in this "Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks" questionnaire?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

5. Please indicate your gender:
 - a. Female
 - b. Male

8. Are you a Ball State University Faculty or Staff member?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

9. Does your child/children attend either of the following? (select all that apply)
- a. Ball State Child Study Center
 - b. Teddy Bear Child Care Center
 - c. None of the Above
10. What is your race/ethnicity? (select all apply)
- a. Non-Hispanic White/European American
 - b. Non-Hispanic Black/African American
 - c. Asian
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. Native American
 - f. Pacific Islander
 - g. Other: Please specify _____

Considerations of Body Image During Toy Selection/Approval

For questions 9-16, please select how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

11. I try to select toys that I consider to be a positive role model for my child/children.
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
12. I consider the influence of body image when I select toys for my child/children.
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
13. I consider fashion dolls positive influencers of body image for my child/children.
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree

14. I consider fashion dolls negative influencers of body image for my child/children.
- Strongly Agree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
15. I consider the original Barbie doll a positive influencer of body image for my child/children.
- Strongly Agree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
16. I consider the original Barbie doll a negative influencer of body image for my child/children.
- Strongly Agree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
17. I would buy an original Barbie doll for my child/children.
- Strongly Agree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
18. I would **NOT** buy an original Barbie doll for my child/children.
- Strongly Agree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Neither Agree or Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree

Barbie Doll Body Shape

Questions 17-22 refer to your opinion of the body shape of the **Original** Barbie doll (refer to image below). For questions 16-21, please select how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

19. I believe the original Barbie doll looks too thin.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
20. I believe the original Barbie doll is the perfect size.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
21. I believe the original Barbie doll looks too overweight.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
22. I believe the original Barbie doll looks too young.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
23. I believe the original Barbie doll looks too old.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree



24. Do you believe the **Original** Barbie doll promotes a positive body image to children?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please explain why: _____

Questions 23-30 seek to understand how you would alter the original Barbie doll body shape to improve the doll's illustration of body image. For questions 22-29, please select how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

25. I would prefer my child played with a Barbie doll with a thinner waist.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

26. I would prefer my child played with a Barbie doll with a wider waist.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

27. I would prefer my child played with a taller Barbie doll.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

28. I would prefer my child played with a shorter Barbie doll.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

29. I would prefer my child played with a Barbie doll with a smaller chest.
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
30. I would prefer my child played with a Barbie doll with a larger chest.
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
31. I would prefer my child played with a Barbie doll with narrower hips.
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
32. I would prefer my child played with a Barbie doll with wider hips.
- a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree

The Barbie Doll's New Looks

Please refer to the following images when answering questions 31-34:



Original

B. Curvy

C. Petite

D. Tall

33. Of the four Barbie dolls, which do you consider to be the most positive influencer of body image?
- Original
 - Curvy
 - Petite
 - Tall
34. Of the four Barbie dolls, which do you consider to be the most negative influencer of body image?
- Original
 - Curvy
 - Petite
 - Tall

35. Of the four Barbie dolls, which are you most likely to purchase for your child/children?
- a. Original
 - b. Curvy
 - c. Petite
 - d. Tall
36. Of the four Barbie dolls, which are you least likely to purchase for your child/children?
- a. Original
 - b. Curvy
 - c. Petite
 - d. Tall

Thank you for your participation in this survey!

Appendix B-2 - Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks
Final Questionnaire

**PERCEPTIONS OF BODY IMAGE ILLUSTRATED BY THE BARBIE DOLL AND ITS
NEW LOOKS**

Demographics

1. What is your age?
 - a. Younger than 18
 - b. 18-30
 - c. 31-43
 - d. 44-56
 - e. 57+

****If you selected "a. younger than 18" please skip to the end of the survey. Thank you for your time.*

2. Are you the parent or guardian of at least one female child?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

****If you selected "b. No" please skip to the end of the survey. Thank you for your time.*

3. How old is your female child/children? (select all that apply)
 - a. 0-2 years
 - b. 3-5 years
 - c. 6-8 years
 - d. 9+ years

****If you selected "d. 9+" please skip to the end of the survey. Thank you for your time.*

****If you selected "a. 0-2" please skip to the end of the survey. Thank you for your time.*

4. Have you previously participated in this "Perceptions of Body Image Illustrated by the Barbie Doll and its New Looks" questionnaire?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

**** If you selected "a. Yes" please skip to the end of the survey. Thank you for your time.*

5. Please indicate your gender:
 - a. Female
 - b. Male
6. Are you a Ball State University Faculty or Staff member?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. Does your child/children attend either of the following? (select all that apply)
 - a. Ball State Child Study Center
 - b. Teddy Bear Child Care Center
 - c. None of the Above
8. What is your race/ethnicity? (select all apply)
 - a. Non-Hispanic White/European American
 - b. Non-Hispanic Black/African American
 - c. Asian
 - d. Hispanic
 - e. Native American
 - f. Pacific Islander
 - g. Other: Please specify_____
 - h. Prefer not to specify

Considerations of Body Image During Toy Selection/Approval

For questions 9-16, please select how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

9. I try to avoid toys that I consider to be a negative role model for my child/children.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree
10. I do not consider the influence of body image when I select toys for my child/children.
 - a. Strongly Agree
 - b. Somewhat Agree
 - c. Neither Agree or Disagree
 - d. Somewhat Disagree
 - e. Strongly Disagree

11. I consider fashion dolls positive influencers of body image for my child/children.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

12. I do not consider fashion dolls positive influencers of body image for my child/children.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

13. I consider the original Barbie doll a positive influencer of body image for my child/children.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

14. I do not consider the original Barbie doll a positive influencer of body image for my child/children.

- f. Strongly Agree
- g. Somewhat Agree
- h. Neither Agree or Disagree
- i. Somewhat Disagree
- j. Strongly Disagree

15. I would buy an original Barbie doll for my child/children.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

16. I would **NOT** buy an original Barbie doll for my child/children.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree



Original Barbie Doll

Barbie Doll Body Shape

Questions 17-21 refer to your opinion of the body shape of the **Original** Barbie doll (refer to image below). For questions 17-20, please select how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

17. I believe the original Barbie doll looks too thin.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

18. I believe the original Barbie doll looks too overweight.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

19. I believe the original Barbie doll looks too young.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

20. I believe the original Barbie doll looks too old.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

21. Do you believe the **Original** Barbie doll promotes a positive body image to children?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Please explain why: _____



Questions 22-27 seek to understand how you would alter the original Barbie doll body shape to improve the doll's illustration of body image. For questions 22-27, please select how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

22. I would prefer my child played with a Barbie doll with a wider waist.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

23. I would prefer my child played with a taller Barbie doll.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

24. I would prefer my child played with a shorter Barbie doll.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

25. I would prefer my child played with a Barbie doll with a smaller chest.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

26. I would prefer my child played with a Barbie doll with a larger chest.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

27. I would prefer my child played with a Barbie doll with wider hips.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Somewhat Agree
- c. Neither Agree or Disagree
- d. Somewhat Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

The Barbie Doll's New Looks

Please refer to the following images when answering questions 28-31:



28. Of the four Barbie dolls, which do you consider to be the most positive influencer of body image?
- Original
 - Curvy
 - Petite
 - Tall
29. Of the four Barbie dolls, which are you most likely to purchase for your child/children?
- Original
 - Curvy
 - Petite
 - Tall
30. Of the four Barbie dolls, which do you consider to be the least positive influencer of body image?
- Original
 - Curvy
 - Petite
 - Tall

31. Of the four Barbie dolls, which are you least likely to purchase for your child/children?
- a. Original
 - b. Curvy
 - c. Petite
 - d. Tall

Thank you for your participation in this survey!

APPENDIX C

LETTERS OF PERMISSION AND CONSENT

Appendix C-1 – Letter of Permission to Conduct at Teddy Bear Child Care Center

To: Angela Gick

Subject: Master's Thesis: Permission to Conduct Survey

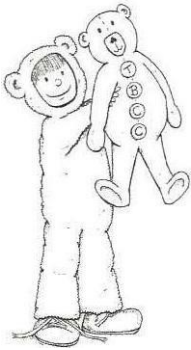
Date: August 17, 2017

Dear Angie,

I hope that everything is well with you. I know it has been awhile since I have reached out to you about involving some of the parents from your child care center in my thesis survey regarding parents' perceptions of the Barbie doll and how its body shape influences their children. With your permission, I would like to survey 20-25 parents/guardians with female children between the ages of 3 and 8 who are current patrons of your facility for a pilot study to test the validity of the survey. The survey will be available online through a link I can provide and is 34 questions long. I estimate it will take participants 15-20 minutes to complete. If you are still interested in assisting with this project, please let me know at your earliest convenience and we can discuss it in further detail.

Thank you for your time,
Grace Douglas
Graduate Student
Family and Consumer Sciences: Apparel Design
gadouglas@bsu.edu
(937) 564-4103

Appendix C-2 – Letter of Permission from Angela Gick



Teddy Bear Child Care 1600 West Cowing Drive
Muncie, Indiana 47304
(765) 288- 1930

September 5, 2017

Dear Grace Douglas,

Thank you for your interest in working with our Teddy Bear Child Care Center families. We would be happy to allow you and those involved in your Master's thesis research study to recruit participants for your questionnaire regarding their perceptions of the Barbie doll and its new looks.

Sincerely,

Angela Gick
Owner at Teddy Bear Child Care Center

Appendix C-3 – Letter of Permission to Conduct Study at Ball State Child Study Center

To: Jennifer Young

Subject: Master's Thesis: Permission to Conduct Study

Date: March 27, 2018

Dear Ms. Young,

My name is Grace Douglas and I am a graduate student in the Apparel Design program. I am writing to request permission to conduct research at the Child Study Center. This study will involve the electronic distribution of a survey to the parents and guardians of children attending your facility regarding their perceptions of the Barbie doll and its new looks. Informed consent will be given prior to the beginning of the survey. This study and all of its materials have been approved by the IRB. The data collected from this study will contribute to a Master's thesis designed to determine how parents perceive the Barbie doll and its new looks and their influence on children's body image.

Please let me know if I may recruit participants from you patrons. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Grace Douglas
(937) 564-4103
gadouglas@bsu.edu
Graduate Student
Ball State University

Appendix C-4 – Letter of Informed Consent

Letter of Informed Consent

Study Title Parents' Perceptions of the Barbie Doll's New Looks

Study Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this study is to understand parents' perceptions of body image as illustrated by the three, new *Fashionista* Barbie dolls and if a more positive body image is needed, how the Barbie doll should be re-designed to promote a more positive body image to children.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

To be eligible to participate in this study, you must be a parent or guardian aged 18 years or older with a female child between the ages of 3 and 8 and must either be a Ball State University faculty or staff member or have your child/children currently enrolled at either Ball State University's Child Study Center or Teddy Bear Child Care Center.

Participation Procedures and Duration

For this project, you will be asked to complete a survey about your perceptions of the Barbie doll's new looks and their influence on body image. It will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Data Confidentiality or Anonymity

All data will be maintained as anonymous and no identifying information, such as names, will be associated with collected data and therefore will not appear in any publication or presentation of the data.

Storage of Data

The data collected will be entered into a software program and stored on the researcher's password-protected computer for three years and then deleted. Only members of the research team will have access to the data.

Risks or Discomforts

The only anticipated risk from participating in this study is that you may not feel comfortable answering some of the questions. You may choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable and you may quit the study at any time.

Who to Contact Should You Experience Any Negative Effects from Participating in this Study

Should you experience any feelings of anxiety, there are counseling services available to you through the Ball State University Counseling Center, 765-285-1736 or, for non-BSU affiliates, Lykins Counseling Clinic, 765-282-7150.

Benefits

There are no perceived benefits for participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your permission at any time for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the investigator. Please feel free to ask any questions of the investigator before signing this form and at any time during the study.

IRB Contact Information

For one's rights as a research subject, you may contact the following: For questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070 or at irb@bsu.edu.

Study Title Parents' Perceptions of the Barbie Doll's New Looks

Consent

I agree to participate in this research project entitled, "The Effect of Early Childhood Experiences on Interest in Exercise." I have had the study explained to me and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate.

To the best of my knowledge, I meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria for participation (described on the previous page) in this study.

Researcher Contact Information

Principal Investigator:

Grace Douglas, Graduate Student
Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306
Telephone: (937) 564-4103
Email: gadouglas@bsu.edu

Faculty Supervisor:

Dr. Paula Sampson
Department of Family and Consumer
Sciences
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306
Telephone: (765) 285-5066
Email: psampson@bsu.edu

Letter of Informed Consent

Study Title Parents' Perceptions of the Barbie Doll's New Looks

Study Purpose and Rationale

The purpose of this study is to understand parents' perceptions of body image as illustrated by the three, new *Fashionista* Barbie dolls and if a more positive body image is needed, how the Barbie doll should be re-designed to promote a more positive body image to children.

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria

To be eligible to participate in this study, you must be a parent or guardian aged 18 years or older with a female child between the ages of 3 and 8.

Participation Procedures and Duration

For this project, you will be asked to complete a survey about your perceptions of the Barbie doll's new looks and their influence on body image. It will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Data Confidentiality or Anonymity

All data will be maintained as anonymous and no identifying information, such as names, will be associated with collected data and therefore will not appear in any publication or presentation of the data.

Storage of Data

The data collected will be entered into a software program and stored on the researcher's password-protected computer for three years and then deleted. Only members of the research team will have access to the data.

Risks or Discomforts

The only anticipated risk from participating in this study is that you may not feel comfortable answering some of the questions. You may choose not to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable and you may quit the study at any time.

Who to Contact Should You Experience Any Negative Effects from Participating in this Study

Should you experience any feelings of anxiety, there are counseling services available to you through Lykins Counseling Clinic, 765-282-7150.

Benefits

There are no perceived benefits for participating in this study.

Compensation

Participants who successfully complete the questionnaire via Amazon Mechanical Turk will receive a \$0.25 credit via Amazon Mechanical Turk.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw your permission at any time for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the investigator. Please feel free to ask any questions of the investigator before signing this form and at any time during the study.

IRB Contact Information

For one's rights as a research subject, you may contact the following: For questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Director, Office of Research Integrity, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, (765) 285-5070 or at irb@bsu.edu.

Study Title Parents' Perceptions of the Barbie Doll's New Looks

Consent

I agree to participate in this research project entitled, "The Effect of Early Childhood Experiences on Interest in Exercise." I have had the study explained to me and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate.

To the best of my knowledge, I meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria for participation (described on the previous page) in this study.

Researcher Contact Information

Principal Investigator:

Grace Douglas, Graduate Student
Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

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Muncie, IN 47306
Telephone: (937) 564-4103
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APPENDIX D

RECRUITMENT LETTERS

Appendix D-1 – Recruitment Letter for Pilot Study to Patrons of the Teddy Bear Child Care Center

Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is Grace Douglas and I am a graduate student conducting this study as a fulfillment of my Master of Science degree in Apparel Design. This study is being conducted to understand parents' perceptions of body image as illustrated by the three, new Fashionista Barbie dolls and if a more positive body image is needed, how the Barbie doll should be re-designed to promote a more positive body image to children. Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from this study at any time without prejudice from the investigators. There is no penalty for not participating or for withdrawing. There are no costs to you or any other party for participating in this study. All data collected in this study will be anonymous; no personal data will be used as an identifier and will not be reported with results throughout the study.

To participate in this study you must be:

- At least 18 years of age
- The parent or guardian or a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8
- A current patron of the Teddy Bear Child Care Center in Muncie, Indiana

This project has been reviewed according to Ball State University's procedures governing your participation in this research.

A document of Informed Consent is attached with this email and is also available to be viewed at the beginning of the survey.

Thank you for your assistance with this research project. Please contact me, Grace Douglas, with any questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study. I can be reached at (937) 564-4103 or gadouglas@bsu.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Paula Sampson by email psampson@bsu.edu.

Please click on the link below to take the survey. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes of your time.

https://bsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5BVE4WYFnbj4EFn

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Grace Douglas
Graduate Student
Family and Consumer Sciences: Apparel Design
gadouglas@bsu.edu
(937) 564-4103

Appendix D-2 – Recruitment Letter for Final Study to Ball State University Faculty and Staff
and Patrons of Ball State Child Study Center

Dear Parents and Guardians,

My name is Grace Douglas and I am a graduate student conducting this study as a fulfillment of my Master of Science degree in Apparel Design. This study is being conducted to understand parents' perceptions of body image as illustrated by the three, new Fashionista Barbie dolls and if a more positive body image is needed, how the Barbie doll should be re-designed to promote a more positive body image to children. Your participation in the survey is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from this study at any time without prejudice from the investigators. There is no penalty for not participating or for withdrawing. There are no costs to you or any other party for participating in this study. All data collected in this study will be anonymous; no personal data will be used as an identifier and will not be reported with results throughout the study.

To participate in this study you must be:

- At least 18 years of age
- The parent or guardian or a female child or children between the ages of 3 and 8 years
- A current patron of Ball State University's Child Study Center and/or a faculty or staff member of Ball State University

This project has been reviewed according to Ball State University's procedures governing your participation in this research. Thank you for your assistance with this research project. Please contact me, Grace Douglas, with any questions or concerns regarding your participation in this study. I can be reached at (937) 564-4103 or gadouglas@bsu.edu. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Paula Sampson by email psampson@bsu.edu.

Please click on the link below to take the survey. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes of your time.

https://bsu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1MIfMovUdyG8wYJ

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Grace Douglas
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(937) 564-4103